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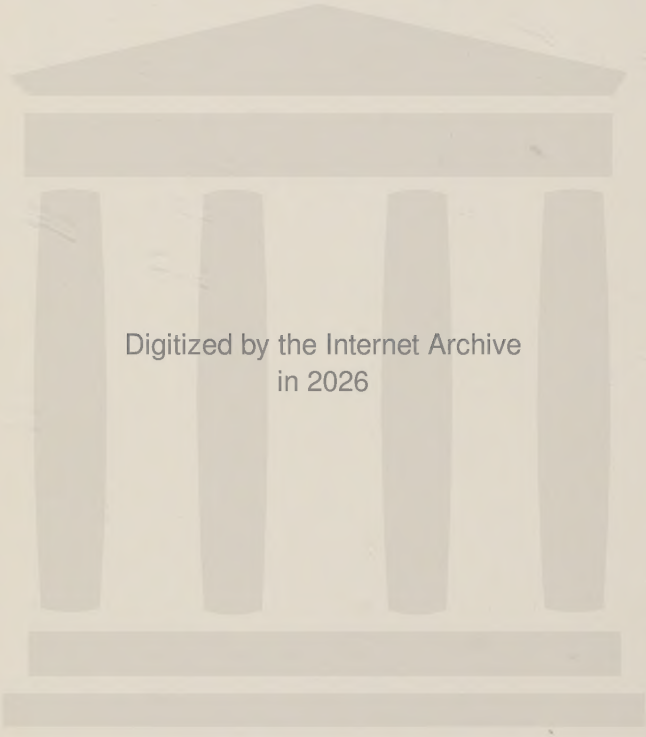
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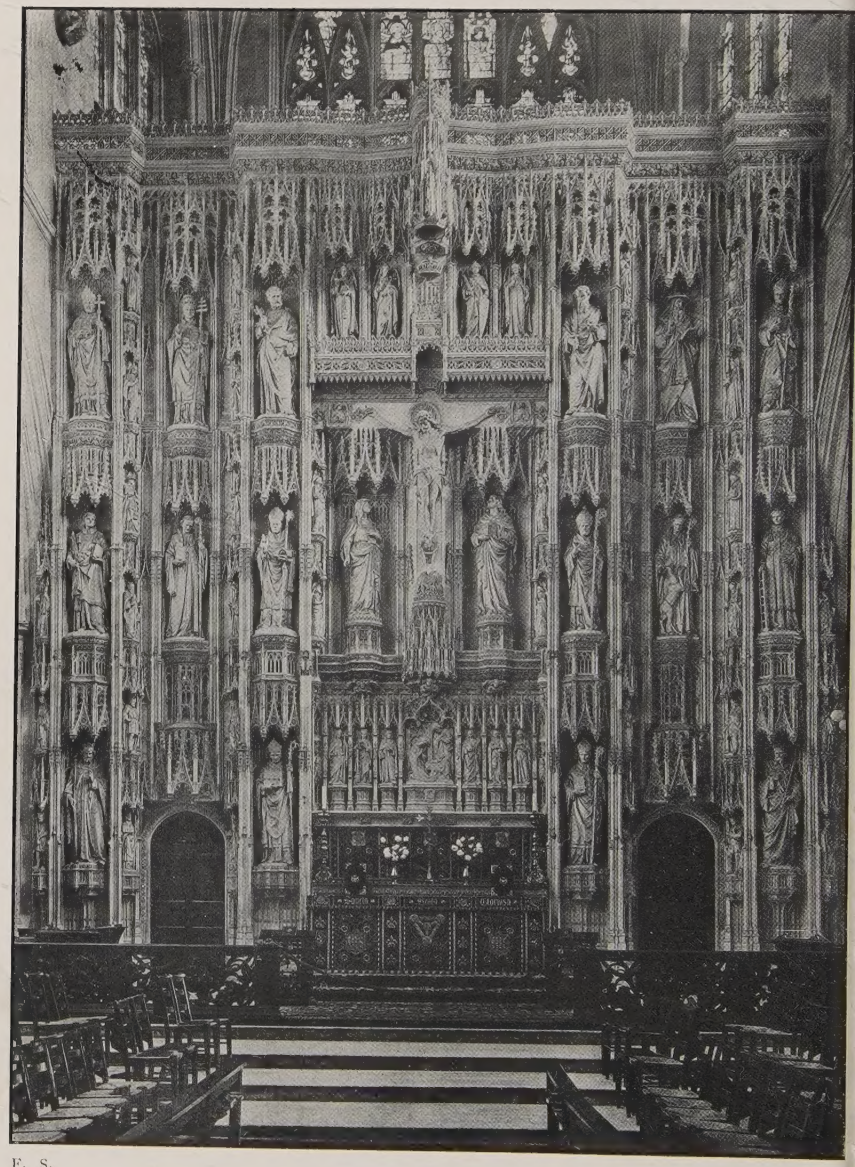

F. S.

Winchester Cathedral

The Chancel of English Churches

The Altar, Reredos, Lenten Veil, Communion Table, Altar Rails, Houseling Cloth, Piscina, Credence, Sedilia, Aumbry, Sacrament House, Easter Sepulchre, Squint, etc.

BY

FRANCIS BOND, M.A.

Author of "Gothic Architecture in England," "Cathedrals of England and Wales," "Screens and Galleries in English Churches," "Fonts and Font Covers," "Stalls and Tabernacle Work," "Misericords," "Dedications, Symbolism, Saints and their Emblems," "Westminster Abbey," "Introduction to English Church Architecture"

WITH 229 ILLUSTRATIONS

HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
London, New York, Toronto, Melbourne, and Bombay
1916

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PRINTED AT
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PREFACE

In the Catholic Church, in Early Christian as in mediæval days, in England as on the Continent, the object of the church builder at all times has been to construct a shelter and shrine for the altar, on which should be performed with due ritual and ceremonial the Church's central service, the Mass, or as it was later styled among us, the Holy Communion; the altar is not there for the church, but the church for the altar. Around it clustered a group of accessories, all closely connected with the altar. Behind was the reredos; in front, at the penitential season, the Lenten veil, and, in later days, the altar rails. To the right was a single or double piscina for the disposal of ablutions at the altar, and sedilia for the use of the celebrant and his assistants. To the left was set up the Easter sepulchre, to which the Host was transferred from the altar to be watched till Easter morn, and, in churches in Scotland and on the Continent, a Sacrament house, where was reserved the viaticum. These, the contents of the chancel, are the subject of this volume.

As the history of the altar and its accessories is of the highest importance to the student of ecclesiastical antiquities, so is the study one of exceptional difficulty. In the first place, one must ascertain what are the sources and authorities for the history, which is known to few. Neither is it possible for any student to possess himself of the long list of volumes which are indispensable to the inquiry. Indeed, in only two libraries —the British Museum and the Bodleian—can the whole of the authorities which have been employed in the preparation of this volume, and which are detailed on pp. 259-261, be found. The first object, therefore, of the present volume has been to put together in reasonable compass information now almost wholly inaccessible, stored away in books, many of which have long been out of print, or in the back numbers of the Transactions of London and provincial archæological societies.

The second object has been to get together a representative collection of the more important examples of the altar and its accessories in this country. These illustrations are very numerous, and not only throw light on the text, but show forth

the great abundance and variety of English mediæval art which still survives in our ancient churches. Never before have the English Reredos, the Communion Table, the Altar Rails, the Piscina, the Sedilia, the Easter Sepulchre, and the Sacrament House been illustrated in such comprehensive fashion as in this volume. So it goes forth, to join its predecessors on Screens and Galleries, Stalls and Tabernacle Work, Misericords, Fonts and Font Covers, Church Bells, Pulpits and Lecterns, Patron Saints and their Emblems—a humble attempt to describe and illustrate the inexhaustible treasures of our English churches.

A few of the illustrations of the volume are from photographs by the writer; the majority are contributed by friends. He has to lament the loss of a generous contributor to this, as to the other volumes of the series, Mr C. F. Nunneley, who, shortly after being mentioned in dispatches, fell at Neuve Chapelle, on the 26th of October 1914.

"Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit."

For photographs, drawings, or blocks acknowledgments are due to Rev. W. T. Alston, Mr A. W. Anderson, A.R.I.B.A., Mr W. H. Banks, Mr F. G. M. Beaumont, Mr R. B. Brierley, Dr G. G. Buckley, Dr P. B. Burroughs Mr E. Claypole, Mr J. J. Creswell, Mr F. H. Crossley, Mr F. T. Davys, Mr W. Marriott Dodson, Mr G. C. Druce, Mr J. F. East, Mr W. Eaton, A.R.I.B.A., Mr Cecil Gethen, Mr C. Goulding, Mr E. L. Guilford Mr J. F. Hamilton, Mr F. T. S. Houghton, Mr H. E. Illingworth, A.R.I.B.A., Mr F. Jenkin, Mr P. M. Johnston, F.S.A., Mrs Jessie Lloyd, Mr G. H. Lovegrove, Mr A. Macpherson, F.S.A. (Scot.), Rev. W. Marshall, F.S.A., Mr H. E. Miller, Mr R. H. Murray, Miss M. P. Perry, Miss E. K. Prideaux, Rev. H. Bedford Pim, Rev. E. J. Pope, Rev. G. W. Saunders, Mr C. B. Shuttleworth, Mr J. Challoner Smith, F.S.A., Mr S. Smith, Miss L. A. P. Sumner, Mr F. R. P. Sumner, Rev. F. Sumner, Mr F. R. Taylor, Mr J. Thirlwall, Mr David Weller, Mrs R. Williamson. Reproductions of the above are distinguished by the initials of the owner of the photograph or block. The following books also have been drawn on for illustrations: Mr R. W. Billing's *Durham Cathedral;* Mr M. H. Bloxam's *Principles of Gothic Architecture;* Dehio und von Bezold's *Die Kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlandes;* S. Gunton's *Peterborough Cathedral;* Mr T. Garner in *Associated Societies' Reports; Gentleman's Magazine;* Dr F. G. Lee's *Glossary of Liturgical and Ecclesiastical Terms;* Mr J. H. Parker in *Glossary of Architecture* and *Archæological Journal;* Mr Edmund Sharpe's *Lincoln Excursion;* the *Transactions of the Architectural and Archæological Societies of St Albans, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and*

Norwich, and Wiltshire, and the present writer's *Westminster Abbey* and *Introduction to English Church Architecture*.

The proofs have been read by Rev. G. C. Niven. The text has also been revised and much valuable information added by Rev. Christopher Wordsworth, Canon of Salisbury, and Rev. S. J. M. Price, D.D.

Lists of the leading works consulted are given on pp. 259-261 ; other references will be found in footnotes to the text. An index to the illustrations and to the places mentioned in the text, and an index of subjects, are given at the end of the volume. The writer will be glad to receive any corrections or suggestions through his publisher, Mr Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, Amen Corner, London, E.C.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	The Altar	1
II.	The Reredos	51
III.	The Lenten Veil	101
IV.	The Communion Table	106
V.	The Altar Rails	121
	The Houseling Cloth	140
VI.	The Piscina	143
	The Credence	164
VII.	The Sedilia	176
VIII.	The Aumbry	204
	The Sacrament House	215
IX.	The Easter Sepulchre	220
X.	The Squint	242
	Appendix—The Holy Water Stoup	255
	Bibliographies	259
	Index Locorum	263
	Index Rerum	273

THE ENGLISH CHANCEL

CHAPTER I

THE ALTAR

Roman Altars—Wooden *v.* Stone Altars—Shape and Size of Altar—Lateral Altars of Chancel Arch—Supports of Altar—Crosses on Altar Slab—Ornamentation of Altar—Elevation of Altar—The Baldachino or Ciborium—Altar Canopy—Image Brackets—Altar Beam—Relics—Superaltars—Number of Altars—Position of Altars—Destruction of Altars—Survival of Altar Slabs and Minor Altars.

Jewish and Roman Altars

Of all the accessories of Christian worship in the ancient churches the altar ever stood first in dignity and importance. Indeed, strictly speaking, it was no accessory; the church was an accessory of the altar, not the altar of the church. In primary function the church was but a shelter for the altar. From many lines converged the importance given from the first to the altar in Christian churches. In the Old Testament, from first to last, the presence of the altar was inseparably connected with the idea of worship. To the pagan convert the altar was equally familiar. Wherever there was a Greek or Roman temple, there was an altar. Roman altars still remain scattered away, even so far as the remote Britons, in museums, or serving as milestones, and in one or two instances as fonts, *e.g.*, at Chollerton and Haydon Bridge, Northumberland,[1] and as a holy-water stoup at Auckland, Durham. In many cases Roman baths and sarcophagi of granite, basalt, porphyry,

[1] Illustrated in *Fonts and Font Covers* by the writer, pp. 98 and 100.

alabaster, and marble were pressed into Christian service as altars; numerous examples occur in Italy and the South of France.[1]

Wooden Altars

In addition to Jewish and pagan precedents, there were Christian usages also which had much to do in determining the after history of the altar. In the first place, for some three centuries public worship had been in the main interdicted to the new sect; the Christians in normal times gathered together for worship in the mansions of the wealthier of the converts. In these, doubtless, the altar as a rule was none other than the domestic table of wood. It is indeed recorded by tradition that when St Peter arrived at Rome, he celebrated his first communion on a "*mensa tripes*," a three-legged table, brought from one of the "*triclinia*," or dining-rooms, of the palace; there are several representations of this three-legged table in the catacombs. For some nine generations the faithful habitually received the Eucharist at a wooden table, as the Apostles themselves had done in Christ's last days. No wonder, then, that this was long the accepted form of the altar, a form consecrated by long and unbroken tradition. And though in the Western Church the stone altar ultimately was preferred, yet in the whole of the jurisdiction of the Greek Church the table form of wood endured, as it does to this day. Even in the Western Church the wooden table was never wholly ousted. Nay, in St John Lateran is what is reputed the most sacred altar in Western Christendom, containing the very table on which St Peter himself is believed to have officiated; this altar contains no relic, and at it none other but the Pope officiates. It is rarely exposed to view; it is a table of cedar about 4 feet high; the upper slab, which is also of wood, rests on four wooden legs. The Apostle Paul (1 Cor. x. 21), St John Chrysostom, and many others, speak of the altar as the "Lord's Table." St Athanasius tells of an altar of wood which the Arians burnt in the church of Alexandria. St Augustine describes how Maximian, Bishop of Bagai in Africa, was beaten to death with the fragments of the wooden altar beneath which he had taken refuge. Mosaics of the sixth century at Ravenna, and those of S. Maria Maggiore at Rome, represent altars of wood. Again and again, in ancient ivories, in the illuminations of manuscripts, and on frescoed walls, representations occur of altars, of which,

[1] Parker's *Archæology of Rome*, xi. 85.

whatever may be the materials of the slab, the legs are too slender to be of anything but wood.[1]

But there was another and even more potent tradition in the Western Church. For the most part pagan Rome was tolerant of any and every religion, provided that there was no suspicion of its being employed to mask secret political conspiracy. When the latter was dreaded, panic set in, and there were persecutions, which as a rule soon terminated, but in which many thousands of Christians met their death. For the dweller at Rome, whether pagan or Christian, the place of interment was the catacombs. Rome did not war with the dead; and down to the galleries and chambers of the catacombs the Christian burial clubs transported the bodies of their martyred brethren. Here, too, in secret, in times of persecution, assemblies for Christian worship took place in the larger subterranean chambers. In such a chamber the body of a more famous martyr was usually enclosed in a sarcophagus placed on the floor of the chamber in a recess or "*arcisolium*," beneath an arched canopy hewn out of the solid rock. Here then, ready to hand, was an altar, viz., the coffin slab beneath which the body of the martyr lay. Just then as the wooden table was connected in loving memory by the early Christians with many generations of good Christian people living peaceably in their habitations, so the stone altar called to mind hurried, secret, perilous communions of the Christians of Rome down in the noisome gloom of the catacombs, lit only by flickering lamp or torch, before the altar-tomb of him whose fate might any moment be theirs. Such an altar slab may be seen in the catacombs of Naples above the coffin of St Gaudiosus, and therefore of the date 453-468. A magnificent sarcophagus-altar remains in a chapel of the Renaissance church of S. Celso, Milan; formerly it was in the Romanesque church and encased in marble. A sarcophagus is employed as altar in the church of the two Maries in Florence; at St Clamens, Gers; at Tongres, Holland; in the crypt of S. Zeno, Verona; two in S. Stefano, Bologna; a very fine one is to be seen in the Christian Museum at Perugia. It was long, however, before the superior tradition of the stone altar was generally accepted. The Greek Church, not being in heritage to the catacomb tradition, ever retained the wooden table. St Silvester indeed (314-336) ordered that altars in the Western Church should be of stone;[2] and the order was renewed in the Council of Epône,

[1] See illustrations in *La Messe*, vol. i. In mediæval Latin the term "*mensa*" is usually confined to the slab which forms the upper part of the altar.

[2] This decree is of doubtful authenticity.

A.D. 517, in a decree which is headed "*ut altaria nisi lapidea chrismatis unctione non sacrentur.*"

Wooden altars also were in use, by exception, in England up to the Reformation. They had been common from time immemorial in the Anglo-Saxon Church; for the altars which St Wulstan (1062-1095) ordered to be destroyed in his diocese of Worcester are spoken of as "*altaria lignea jam inde a priscis diebus in Anglia.*" In the Constitutions attributed to Egbert, Archbishop of York, A.D. 750, was one that no altars should be consecrated with chrism except such as were built of stone. At the Norman Conquest they must still have been common, for Lanfranc had to issue an edict against their use in 1076. A wooden altar was bequeathed in 1432 to Aldwerk chapel. And a bequest was made in 1435, "*quod unum altare fiat bene et effectualiter de tabulis,*" in St John's church, Hungate, York. Erasmus mentions seeing an altar in the Martyrdom in Canterbury cathedral; it was a wooden one, sacred to the Virgin: "there the holy man is said to have uttered a last farewell to the Virgin when death was nigh at hand." At St John, Hungate, York, in 1435, there was a wooden altar contrived "a double debt to pay," for it was also a chest containing books and vestments. It is significant also that before the Conquest the common appellation for "altar" was "God's Table" or "God's Board," terms which lingered in use long after stone altars had become general. Moreover, the technical term for the slab of an altar, though it was stone, has always been *mensa*. And at the Reformation the term "table" is used quite indifferently in the rubrics, alike of a table of wood and of an altar of stone. Rightly, therefore, by virtue of its double descent, says Fleury, "*l'autel chrétien estune table et un tombeau.*"[1]

Even when the stone altar was adopted, the form of the wooden table was often preserved; *i.e.*, the altar was not of the form of a sarcophagus, but was a rectangular slab on columns. Synesius (350-431) says: "Sacras columnas amplector quæ puram et incontaminatam a terra mensam sustinent"; and the saint and patriarch, Alexander: "Secum sub sacra mensa pronum in os prostravit et lacrymans oravit"; *i.e.*, he "prostrated himself underneath the altar and prayed for guidance, before arguing with Arius." In a sixth-century mosaic at S. Vitale,

[1] *La Messe*, i. 239. M. de Rossi recognised four varieties of altars in the Roman catacombs: (1) those that were portable; (2) isolated altars; (3) those backing on a wall; (4) those placed in the arched recess of an *arcisolium*.

Ravenna, the stone altar is an exact copy of a wooden altar; it is a square table with four legs, quite plain, and on it is carved a facsimile of a rich cloth almost wholly enveloping it. St Wilfrid (634-709) built an altar whose slab was supported by columns: "altare subnixum columnis loco congruo collocavit." And this appears to be the form of the few Norman

F. B.

Grantham Crypt

altars which have come down to us; *e.g.*, of the fine Romanesque altar at St Germer, and of that of Forehampton, Gloucester. At Daglingworth, Gloucester,[1] is an altar whose slab rests on the cushion of a Norman shaft of the twelfth century.

Between the legs of a table altar, whether of wood or stone, a reliquary was sometimes placed; *e.g.*, in that of Grantham crypt (5).

[1] Illustrated in *La Messe*, i. 89 *bis*.

Shape and Size of Altar

Many of the ancient altars were upright in form, *i.e.*, they were higher than they were broad. This was also the shape of the Roman *cippi*, many of which were converted by the early Christians into altars, especially in the fifth century. In the Capitoline Museum at Rome is an upright stone altar, the whole of the front of which is covered with the original pagan inscription; to Christianise it, a Greek cross has been rudely cut in the centre; three similar examples occur in the Lateran Museum, Rome; others at Bagnols, Béziers, Digne, and elsewhere. Sometimes, however, the inscription was effaced, as at Loja, in Spain; sometimes the altar was turned round with the ancient inscription to the wall, as at S. Zacharias, Venice. In 1703 Pope Clement XI. had the following inscription carved on a pagan altar in use at S. Teodoro, Rome:—

"IN HOC MARMORE GENTILIUM OLIM INCENSA FUMABANT,"

i.e., "On this marble altar once smoked the incense of the Gentiles." At S. Maria Traspontina is an altar with the original dedication to

"DEO SOLI, INVICTO MITHRA,"

i.e., "To him who alone is God, Mithras invincible."

It may have been because of the precedent set by the Roman *cippi* and altars that the normal form of the early Christian stone altars was a cube. Other forms, however, occur, *e.g.*, circular and semicircular altars are found.

In England also the square altar was the earlier type. In the illustrations given in the Alcuin Club tractate on the English altar, all the altars are shown square up to the fourteenth century. Small altars, four-square, are constantly seen in the drawings and pictures of the early Middle Ages. Such are those still seen round the ruined Romanesque apse of the abbey of Montmajour, near Arles. At Peterhausen, in the diocese of Constance, the high altar up to about 1134 was "parvulum, tantum ex quinque lapidibus compaginatum"; the abbot accordingly built another "majus et sublimius." In 1253 Abbot Herman substituted two big altars in the abbey of Lower Altaich, Bavaria, for six small ones standing in the Lady chapel, because they were "nimis contigua et valde parva, et propter hoc essent multum despectui."[1] Square altars had Scriptural precedent in the injunction of Exod. xxvii. 1: "Thou shalt make an altar five cubits long and five cubits broad: the altar shall be four-square."

[1] Edward Bishop in *Downside Review*, July 1905.

But as the influence of the sarcophagus-altar of the catacombs extended, the tendency was more and more to make the altar a pronounced oblong in shape. Especially was this the case in the later English churches, where the altar slab attained in time very large dimensions. The Norman altar at Forthampton is 5 ft. 3½ in. long; that at Claypole, near Newark, 7 ft. 2 in.; that at the little chapel of St Mary Magdalen, Ripon, is 7 ft. 7 in; that at St Clements, Sandwich, is 8 ft. 3 in.; while the high altar of Arundel is 12 ft. 6 in.,[1] that in the Lady chapel of

H. E. M.

Christchurch: Lady Chapel

Christchurch, Hants, is 12 ft. That at Tewkesbury is of Purbeck marble, and was 13 ft. 8 in. long; but in 1730 it was cut in two to provide seats for the church porch. The two halves were put together again at a modern restoration, when the slab was shortened to 13 ft. 6 in.[2]

There was a special reason why the high altar should be large. At first the altar slab was regarded as so holy that

[1] Illustrated in Parker's *Concise Glossary*, p. 8.

[2] It may be added that the length of an altar should be proportioned to the width of a chancel—the chancel of Arundel church is 30 ft. wide.

nothing should be placed upon it but the consecrated elements, and such objects, the cup, paten, and linen cloth, as were necessary accessories, together perhaps with the book of the Gospels, regarded as the symbol or representative of Christ Himself. But even in the ninth century a pastoral attributed to Pope Leo IV. admits also to be placed on the altar "reliquaries

J. F. E.

Asthall, Oxon.

or a pyx with the Body of Our Lord as viaticum." The tendency, once begun, to load the altar, increased ever in force. Nowadays the tabernacle with the reserved sacrament is the largest and most conspicuous object on a Catholic altar, and dictates the design of the whole altar. So early as the fourteenth century it had become common on great days to expose on the altar all the church treasury and church plate, with reliquaries in

the form of caskets, arms, busts, and what not. On the high altar of York minster, in 1483, there were twelve statuettes of the Apostles, silver gilt, as well as many reliquaries. In the fifteenth century, says a Bavarian chronicler, "totum sanctuarium in altari stetit"; "the whole church-treasury of Fressing stood on the High altar" on festal days. Altars of this "buffet" or "sideboard" type had necessarily to be large.[1]

On the other hand, minor altars were sometimes quite small; *e.g.*, that in the chapel of St John the Baptist, Belper, below the

H. B. P.

Ranworth, Norfolk

east window, is but 3½ ft. long. The example illustrated at Asthall, Oxon., is of quite small dimensions (8).

Lateral Altars of Chancel Arch

Altars so small as these explain how it was possible to find room for three altars even in the earliest and humblest type of parish church, viz., that which was composed of merely an unaisled nave and a rectangular or apsidal chancel. It is a curious fact, which calls for explanation, that in these and other early types of English church it is very rare to find the chancel of the same width as the nave. It is just a little narrower. And when one remembers that till late in the twelfth century, when such spacious arches as those of the chancel of Steyning, Sussex, and Mickleham, Surrey, were erected, chancel arches

[1] Edward Bishop in *Downside Review*, July 1905.

were quite narrow, especially in the Pre-Conquest churches, one sees that a church planned as above just afforded space for a couple of lateral altars at either side of the east end of the

J. C. S.

Tattershall, Lincolnshire

nave, provided that these altars were not of the dimensions of the high altar, but comparatively small,[1] like the altar at Belper, and perhaps square in form, or even upright, like a Roman altar, or a *cippus*.

J. T.

Patricio, Brecknock

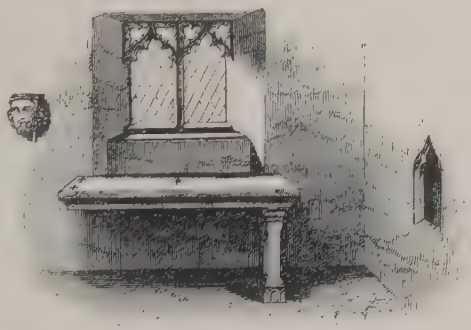
When, from the thirteenth century onwards, a screen was set up across the chancel arch, it was still more easy to place

F. R. P. S.

New Shoreham

lateral altars at the east end of an unaisled nave, to which the screen served as a background and reredos; a restored example

is seen at Ranworth, Norfolk (9). But when aisles were added, there was no more need to squeeze the lateral altars into the eastern corners of the nave; they were transferred to the eastern ends of the nave aisles, which, after being at first quite narrow, intended and used for processional purposes only, became normally, from the fourteenth century, broad and spacious, affording plenty of room in the eastern bay of each aisle for an altar of ample proportions. Such altar bays, screened off by woodwork of great beauty, very rarely retaining their altars, but very frequently their piscinas, exist in considerable numbers; *e.g.*, Addlethorpe and Theddlethorpe All Saints, Lincolnshire, and Dennington, Suffolk. The latter is particularly interesting, because both the aisle chapels, that on the north and that on the south, retain not only their screens, but the lofts above them as well. In a few cases, however, although altars were erected in the eastern bays of the aisles, others were also placed in the more ancient position; *i.e.*, in front of the responds of the chancel arch; *e.g.*, at Castle Rising, Norfolk (54). In the ninth-century plan of St Gall there is not only an altar on the eastern wall of each transept, but also one on either side of the arch leading into the chancel. The lateral altars remain to this day in the recesses of the chancel screen of Tattershall, Lincolnshire, which was not presented to the church till 1528 (10). A pair of side altars occupy precisely this position in the aisleless nave of Patricio, or Patrishow, Brecknock (11). Another well-known example is that of Ranworth, Norfolk (9). Other such lateral altars are those of Exeter cathedral, dedicated to St Nicholas and St Mary; Eton College, to St Nicholas and St Peter; of Glasgow, of Gloucester cathedral, to St Thomas and the Salutation; of Hauxton, Cambridgeshire, where there are side recesses of 1229; and Old St Paul's.

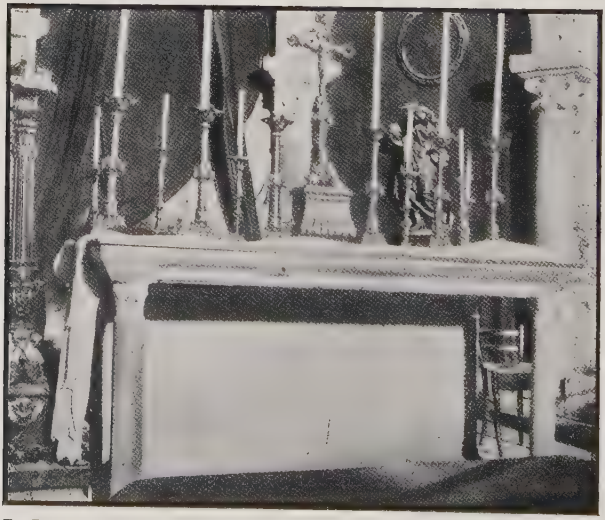


J. H. P.

Chipping Norton, Oxon.

F. B.

Venasque

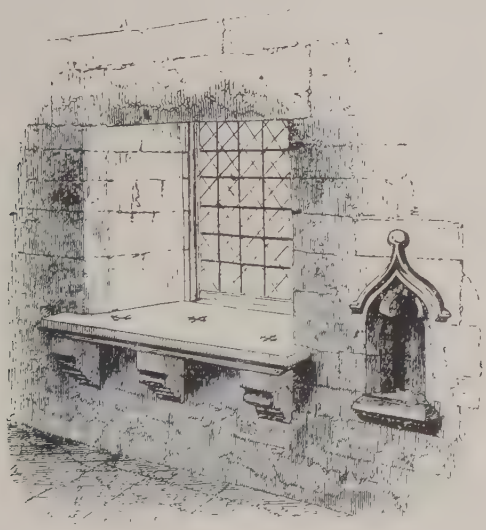


F. B.

Vaison Cathedral

Supports of Altar

Various forms of support were in use for the altar slab or *mensa*. Most often the slab rested on a cubical or oblong mass of solid masonry. Where the altar was of tabular form, it rested, if of wood, on wooden legs ; if of stone, on stone shafts each with the abacus, capital, and base of the day, *e.g.*, at Forthampton, Gloucester, and at Astbury and Chipping Norton, Oxon. In the ancient baptistery of Venasque, Provence, which is probably of the seventh century, the altar slab rests on a single central



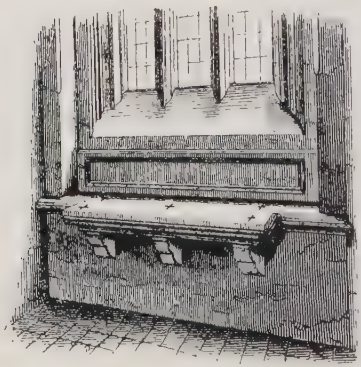
M. H. B.

Warmington, Warwick

column (14). The altar of the chevet of Vaison cathedral, which is of the same epoch, has a slab behind and two columns in front (14). At Theddlethorpe All Saints, Lincolnshire, is a Renaissance altar table of marble, no longer *in situ*, resting on four balusters (117). In one or two examples a stone slab rests on wooden legs, *e.g.*, St John's, Leeds (1634), and the Tichborne chapel, Hampshire. Minor altars were sometimes supported on brackets ; *e.g.*, one in the vestry of Warmington ; others at Shottes-well, Warwickshire ; Belper chapel, Derbyshire, and Broughton Castle chapel (16). There are also examples in which the front of the slab rests on two stone shafts or brackets, and

the back of it on the wall; *e.g.*, one at Abbey Dore, another in the chapel over the entrance to Gloucester Lady chapel; others at Astell, Oxon., and Blewbury, Berkshire (17). In one or two examples a slab forming the sill of a window bears the five consecration crosses, and must therefore have served as the slab of an altar, *e.g.*, an altar in the triforium of Gloucester choir; another in the undercroft of Bedale church, Yorkshire; another at Warmington, Warwick; Broughton Castle, Oxon.; and Blewbury, Berkshire.

The *mensa* was not to be composed of several stones joined together. Pope Innocent III. directed that the altar slab should be a monolith, as symbolical of the unity of the Church: "quod sectionem lapidum prohibet in altari, divisionem fidelium reprobat, ne ecclesia dividatur per errores et schismata."



J. H. P.

Broughton Castle, Oxon.

Crosses on Altar

The normal number of crosses on the altar slab is five; said to be in memory of the Five Wounds of Christ. But really the crosses mark the places where the bishop touched the altar slab with the holy oil at the act of consecration; just as he did consecration crosses on walls. But he may well have touched the altar at five points with symbolic intent as above. At Cookham, Berkshire, the crosses are inlaid in brass. Three crosses only are said to occur sometimes. At Cotes-by-Stow, Lincolnshire, there are six crosses on the *mensa*; at Broughton Castle chapel, nine crosses; at Christchurch, Hampshire, there seem to be ten crosses, of which five are Maltese crosses, and five Latin; there may have been a recutting and reconsecration of the slab. A beautiful *mensa* of wood may be seen on the communion table of Keston, Surrey. A cross is inlaid in the wood in each corner, and in the centre is a larger cross bottonée, in which are the words, "The Keston Marke," and at the base of this cross is the motto, "In hoc signo vinces."

Ornamentation of Altar

The altar slab was almost always kept free from ornamentation, other than the consecration crosses. By exception, the altar slab at Camborne, Cornwall, has the inscription, "*Levint jussit hoc altare pro anima sua.*"[1] As to the front and ends of the altar, some hesitation in usage prevailed. When the altar was of table shape, the natural thing was to provide it with a

W. M.

Blewbury, Berkshire

frontal or *antipendium*, on the upper part of which was a frontlet, both of rich brocade or some such material. Both table-shaped and built-up altars are constantly represented from the earliest times so ornamented. But the *antipendium* in early times was sometimes composed of plaques of precious materials nailed on to a wooden front. At S. Ambrogio, Milan, and St Emmeran, Ratisbon, the plaques are gold reliefs; as also in the Basle example, now in the Cluny Museum in Paris; the plaques are bronze reliefs in an example in the Burgos Museum, and in

[1] *English Church Furniture*, p. 7.

others in Italy, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden; at Salerno they are of ivory.[1] Less often the front of a built-up altar was decorated with arcading, as in a twelfth-century example in the abbey church of St Germer, and in Vaison cathedral; the front of the altar in Wykeham's chantry chapel at Winchester is panelled. Occasionally figures in relief occupied the front of an altar. In the tower wall of Hovingham, Yorkshire, there was found built up what looks like the stone frontal of an altar; it is 5 ft. long and 2½ ft. broad; on it eight figures are sculptured.[2] The front of the Prior's altar at Wenlock is panelled (45). An elaborate example at Tor Bryan, Devon, is constructed out of a pulpit. In France examples occur till quite late.

When the altar was of wood, its front was no doubt often painted; numerous painted frontals remain in the Bergen and Christiania Museums, and in Germany.[3] But the tendency was more and more to leave the altar entirely plain. This was so in very early days. Edmer, a friend of Archbishop Anselm, says that the high altar of the Anglo-Saxon cathedral of Canterbury was of unadorned masonry: "de impolitis lapidibus et cemento extructum erat."

It has been said that it was desirable at the penitential seasons to emphasise the bareness of the altar then stripped of its frontals.[4] A more practical explanation is that when it had become a fixed usage to provide the altar with frontals varying in colour with the liturgical seasons, it was not worth while to give it ornamentation which would never be seen except when the altar was dismantled.

At Woodborough church, Notts., is the following inscription on the altar slab: "Sacro usui me dedit Johannes, filius et heres Roberti Woode de Lambley armigeri, qui Johannes fuit Recordator de Newarke unus custodum pacis comitatus et Viridarius Forestæ de Sherwood, soli Deo Fretus."

"Qui secum considerat quam vana et instabilis est potestas, is nihil timebit Deum tunc, et eum ama ut ameris ab eo; amabis Deum si imitaberis eum in hoc autem omnibus vel prodesse et nulli nocere. Eripe me de inimicis meis, Domine, ad te confugi."

On the framework beneath the slab of the altar of Whit-

[1] Enlart's *Manuel d'architecture religieuse*, p. 728.

[2] *Archæological Journal*, 1849, p. 189. It may, however, be the base of an Easter sepulchre.

[3] Enlart's *Manuel d'architecture francaise*, i. 738.

[4] Altars seem never to have been left unclothed, except to be washed, and were clothed again when dry.—S. J. M. P.

church, near Denbigh, is an inscription, "NON INCOGNITO DEO, 1617."[1]

Very rarely armorial bearings appear on altars, as at Preston, near Brighton, but frequently on brasses, monuments, copes, etc.; so also on a modern altar at Bramhope, near Leeds.

On either side of English altars there were usually side curtains, "ridels," or "riddells," or "costers," "to envelop the altar in an atmosphere of mystery," or to prevent the candles on the altar from flickering.* The curtains hung on looped cords, which ran on rings. A small altar with side curtains is shown in a MS. of a "Book of Hours," in the British Museum; also in two fifteenth-century mass books in the Bodleian Library.[2]

Elevation of Altar

As a rule the chancel was one or two steps higher than the nave; at times, however, when the ground sloped eastward, it was on the level of the nave, or even below it. At Mytton, Yorkshire, the ground slopes from west to east, and a flight of three steps leads down to the chancel. The space between the chancel stalls was often sunk one or two steps; "restorations" have almost always destroyed this low level; but in the seventies Sharnbrook, Beds., was still unaltered, and Gillingham, Dorset, at any rate till 1902. A rise of level, usually by a single step, marked the important boundary line between the choir of the clergy and singers and the presbytery, *i.e.*, the sanctuary of the high altar. The altar itself, in England, as a rule, was raised but little above the level of the sanctuary, and its steps were generally few, low, and broad.[3] This was necessary for convenience of ceremonial. Nothing is more inconvenient and, indeed, more dangerous than the lofty flights of steep steps which have so often superseded the ancient arrangements. In very many cases it will be found, by observing the height of piscinas, sedilia, aumbries, and stringcourses above the pavement, that the original levels of the chancels have been tampered with.[4]

[1] With allusion no doubt to Acts xvii. 23, where, however, the Vulgate has *Ignoto Deo*.—C. W.

[2] Illustrated in Alcuin, *English Altars*, Plates VIII. and XI.

[3] The greater churches had, as a rule, three steps, for celebrant, deacon, and subdeacon; the parish churches more often but one. The steps should not be more than 5 or 6 in. high, and 3 ft. broad.

[4] A remarkable example of the sacrifice of convenience of ceremonial to artistic effect is to be seen in the levels of the sacrarium of Westminster cathedral, where, however, there is a crypt below.

* Surely the origin is to be found in the curtains at the back [dossal], sides [riddel] and front, of the earlier baldachinos? H[illegible]

Sometimes, however, a crypt was constructed under the chancel; in this case a steep flight of steps up to the sanctuary was unavoidable. Thus at Wimborne minster the eastern limb was found too short, and underneath it was dug a crypt to contain a processional aisle, as well as the Lady chapel, which was originally east of the high altar. At Hythe the chancel was elevated in order to get room for a subterranean processional path and bonehouse. At St Mary, Guildford, and Saxby, Lincolnshire, the ground rises very steeply to the east up a hillside, necessitating a raised chancel. There are two separate flights of steps up to the altar at Rottingdean, near Brighton. At Walpole St Peter, Norfolk, a public footpath ran along the east wall of the older church; when the chancel was extended eastward, the extension had to be built sufficiently lofty to allow the passage of a vaulted path beneath it from north to south. The fronts or "risers" of the steps were sometimes ornamented with encaustic tiles; sometimes, like the risers of the font steps, they bore inscriptions. At Geddington, Northants, the founder's name and the date of dedication are given: at Bredon, Worcester, the signs of the Zodiac.

The Baldachino or Ciborium or Canopy or Tester

A baldachino or ciborium is a canopy of drapery or masonry above an altar. The two terms are synonymous. A baldachin, baldaquin, or baldachino is, properly speaking, a canopy made of a rich embroidered stuff, originally with woof of silk and warp of gold thread, at Bagdad, from which the name of the material is derived. The term ciborium is a Greek word denoting originally the cup-shaped seed-vessel of the Egyptian water-lily; then it is applied to any cup of this shape; then its meaning is narrowed down to the cup-shaped pyx in which the Sacrament was reserved; then it is applied more widely to any form of pyx, whether a cup, or a suspended dove, or a tabernacle, or *ædiculum* fixed on an altar. Moreover, the canopy of rich brocade which usually covered an altar resembled in shape the Egyptian seed-vessel *inverted*; and so "ciborium" becomes a synonym for "baldaquin." Owing to the ambiguity of the word, it is better to confine the term "ciborium" to the pyx; and in its later signification to use the word "baldachino."

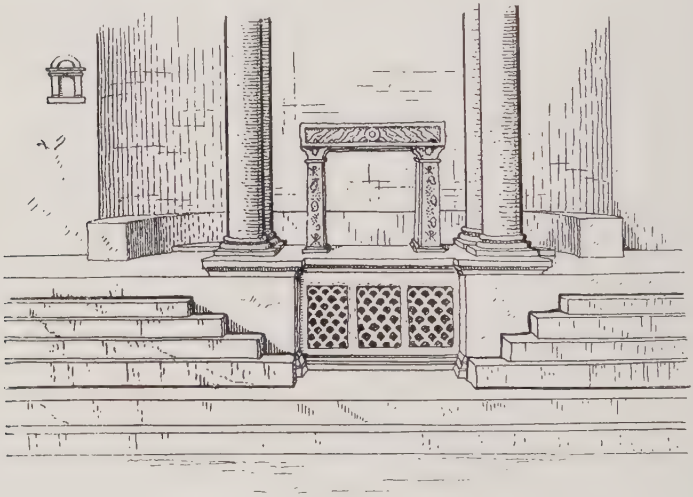
The origin of the baldachino is diverse; partly it came into fashion because of its practical service in sheltering the altar from dust; partly because bars could be fixed from column to column, and from these veils and lights be hung; partly from the desire

to enhance the dignity of the altar, and to give it compensatory value to that which the baptismal piscina received from the baptistery which sheltered it. More than one line of tradition converged in the baldachino. In the first place, there was the revered tradition of the catacombs, that the sarcophagus-tombs of the more famous martyrs were there sheltered by the arch of an *arcisolium*. Secondly, there was Jewish usage. For in the days of the journeyings in the desert "Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and reared up his pillars. And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the Lord commanded Moses." To some extent also the baldachino continued the tradition of the pagan *ædiculum* of ancient Rome; a pedimented roof which was supported by four pillars and sheltered a shrine of some deity. Both sculptures and paintings remain, representing pagan altars thus sheltered and dignified. Medals show small temples of Vesta of similar disposition; simply a cupola surmounting a ring of columns and sheltering an altar. With all those precedents then it is not surprising that the baldachino was present above the very first altars erected in Christian churches.

An exact description remains of the great baldachino of silver presented by the Emperor Constantine to the Lateran church; above, in front, was a silver statue of Our Lord, seated on a chair 5 ft. in height, and weighing 120 lb.; and around were twelve silver statues of the Apostles, each weighing 90 lb. The whole weight of the upper part of the baldachino and its thirteen statues, resting on four columns, was 2,025 lb. of silver. No baldachino, however, of the fourth century remains. To the middle of the fifth century belong two medals in the Roman museums which show altars covered with unmistakable baldachinos. An ivory pyx, also of the fifth century, clearly shows the two front columns and the pediment of the baldachino of an altar.[1] To the sixth century belong fragments of a marble baldachino in St Clement's, Rome. The earliest baldachinos which survive belong to the ninth century. A very remarkable one remains in the aisle of S. Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna, backing, as it always has done, on to a wall; it was originally erected between 807 and 812. A perfect example remains in the museum at Perugia. Two arches of a baldachino remain at Bagnacavallo.[2]

[1] *La Messe*, Plates XLI. and XCIII.
[2] *La Messe*, Plates XCVIII. and XCIX.

To the tenth century probably belong the storied pillars of the majestic baldachino above the high altar of St Mark's, Venice; the capitals belong to the twelfth century; everything above is of the thirteenth or fourteenth century.[1] To the tenth century also probably belong the baldachinos of Narni and Porta Santa. The pretty little hexagonal baldachino in the nave of St Mark's, Venice, seems to be of this period; but it is uncertain whether it originally covered an altar, or, as at Cividale, the piscina of a baptistery. To the eleventh century belongs the baldachino of St Nicholas, Bari, the finest of the



D. B.

Rome: S. Giorgio in Velabro

period; also that of S. Clemente between Aquila and Foggia. St Odilo of Cluny, "incepit etiam *ciborium* super altare St Petri." To the twelfth century probably belong the baldachinos of S. Lorenzo, S. Clemente, and S. Anastasia, Rome; two at Toscanella; that at S. Ambrogio, Milan, the columns of which belong to the days of St Ambrose (fourth century); and a few other minor examples.

With the thirteenth century baldachinos became more frequent; plenty of them indeed existed before that date, but they have been usually reconstructed or demolished. One of the best is that of S. Giorgio in Velabro, Rome, which preserves

[1] *La Messe*, ii. 25.

also both its original altar and the *confessio* or crypt beneath it. The baldachinos of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are largely uniform in design; being pyramidal structures composed of several rows of small shafts, and terminating either in a pediment or in an octagonal roof.[1] Good examples remain at S. Maria in Cosmedin (1296), and St Paul and St Cecilia, Rome, and in Parenzo cathedral and S. Pietro-in-Grado; numerous baldachinos remain in the cathedral of Ratisbon. In the fourteenth century the finest example is the two-storied baldachino of St John Lateran, Rome. On the whole, the baldachino seems to have gone out of fashion more and more after the tenth century, except in Italy.

The Altar Canopy

Of the baldachino proper, *i.e.*, the dome of masonry resting on columns, we have no ancient example in England. The last was the baldachino with altar designed by Torregiano, which remained till 1643 in Henry the Seventh's chapel, Westminster. Nevertheless, the tradition continued here and there in the form of an altar canopy. Of these we have but five examples, and they chiefly occur in one district. Brilley and Michaelchurch, in Herefordshire, not only have a sanctuary screen, but a sanctuary canopy. This latter is a ceiling of oak panelling with molded ribs and carved bosses, extending over the whole of the sanctuary for the whole width of the building, from the east wall to the sanctuary screen, a distance of about 10 ft., and much lower than the roof of the chancel.

At Clun church, Shropshire, there is suspended from the roof a canopy composed of thirty panelled squares in oak, and at its western angles and centre are two angels.[2] Formerly there was at Goosey, Berks., "over the altar a flat 'perpendicular' tester, painted with emblems of the Passion."[3] It "unfortunately disappeared" during a restoration by Mr Street. By far the best design of all is the canopy in a side chapel at Ludlow. As a rule, an altar canopy has to be placed high, that it may not be blackened by the smoke of the altar candles; but, when so placed, it cuts down the view of the great east window, which, with its Crucifixion in stained glass, in the mediæval churches of England was the real reredos of the altar. At Ludlow the side

[1] Cattaneo's *Architecture en Italie*, p. 36.
[2] J. T. Micklethwaite in *Builder*, xxxv. 877.
[3] Parker's *Eccles. Topogr. of Oxfordshire*, p. 61.

canopies are of the usual "tester" or flat form; in the centre, however, the canopy is carried in an arch round the window head; thus the stained glass reredos is not obstructed. In the hospital chapel at Sherborne, Dorset, two long iron bars ending in shields project from the east wall high up above the altar;[1] probably these supported a canopy. At St Mary-at-Hill, E.C., in 1496, there is mentioned "The Iron at the High altar that beareth the canopy."

Though few survive, yet the altar canopy or "*cælatura*" seems originally to have been by no means uncommon. That it was not more common is perhaps due to the inconveniences referred to above. Every one of the nine altars in the eastern transept of Durham had a wooden canopy; for, says the *Rites of Durham*, "All the foresaid nine altars had their several shrines, and *covers of wainscot overhead*." In 1500, John Almyngham of Walberswick, Suffolk, bequeathed £10 for "a *canope over the hygh awter*, welle done, with our Lady and 4 aungelys and the Holy Ghost, goyng upp and down with a cheyne." In an admirable drawing in Abbot Islip's Roll, a large canopy of tester shape is clearly shown above the Rood altar; and from the canopy is suspended the veiled pyx[2] (30). In 1529, at Cranford St John, a strike of barley was left to make a "vault over the table, *i.e.*, the reredos, of the high altar."[3] In 1510, at St Lawrence, Reading, there was "Payed for a small lyne to hang the Kanape over the Hy auter, jd." At Daventry, Northants, there was left "for the maintenaunce of a canopye over the hie auter, iiijd."[4] From these and numerous other entries that might be quoted, it is obvious that the English canopies served a two-fold purpose; partly to protect and dignify the altar, partly to shelter the suspended and veiled pyx.

There is also frequent mention of a smaller canopy or veil hung over the suspended pyx which contained the Reserved Sacrament, and which is shown in the Islip Roll (30). In 1519 money was left at Brayfield, Northants, for "a canopy to hang over the holy and blessed sacrament." In 1521 there was bequeathed at Broughton, Northants, "to the sacrament

[1] Micklethwaite's *Ornaments of the Rubric*, p. 27.

[2] By mistake the drawings in the *Vetusta Monumenta*, and in Scott's *Gleanings from Westminster*, show the pyx not suspended, but resting on a pedestal.

[3] Serjeantson and Longden, *Parish Churches and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire*, p. 231.

[4] Cox's *Churchwardens' Accounts* and *Church Furniture*.

of the church one canopy of blake shylke"; and in 1540, 6s. 8d. "to buy a canopy for the sacrament." In 1507, 2s. 8d.

W. H. B.

Ludlow, Salop

was paid at Tintinhull, Somerset, "for making of a fringe with buttons and tassells to a kerchief to hang over the sacrament."

There survives at Hessett, Suffolk, a solitary example of a pyx canopy.[1]

A third kind of canopy is that which was carried over the Blessed Sacrament when it was borne in procession out of doors on Palm Sunday, Corpus Christi day, etc. In 1532 there was bequeathed 10s. "to buy a cloth to bear over the Holy Sacrament on Corpus Christi day and at all other times needful."[2] At St Mary-at-Hill, E.C., in 1553, there are mentioned "four canopy staves with four knobs, gilt"; and in 1518 there was paid 1d. "for leather thongs for the staves of the canopy for the sacrament"; these were probably attached to the waist belt of each bearer of a canopy stave.[3] Altar canopies have been introduced into several English churches lately; *e.g.*, in Mr Comper's church, St Cyprian, near Lancaster Gate, Regent's Park. Baldachinos of masonry also, supported by columns, have been erected in the cathedrals of Peterborough, Bristol, and Westminster.

Image Brackets

The altar in a Christian church was the earthly representative of the throne of God. And as the right was the place of honour ("Sit thou on my right hand," etc.), it followed that the north of the altar was the more honourable position. (It will be remembered that the gospel was read on the north side of the chancel, and where a gospel desk (p. 226) exists, it is affixed to the north wall of the chancel.) That being so, it follows that the normal position for the image of the patron saint of a church, or the representative of the like, was at the north end of the altar. Thus at Exeter and Westminster, which are dedicated to St Peter, on the north side there was an image of St Peter, on the south side one of St Paul (30). In the church of the Blessed Trinity, Long Melford, Suffolk,[4] the image of the patron, styled *imago principalis*, which had to be kept up at the expense of

[1] Illustrated in Cox and Harvey's *English Church Furniture*, p. 41.

[2] Serjeantson and Longden, *ibid.*, p. 233.

[3] All the quotations throughout this volume from the accounts of St Mary-at-Hill are from the admirable edition by Mr Littlehales, printed by the Early English Text Society.

[4] "At the north end of the High Altar there was a goodly gilt Tabernacle, reaching up to the roof of the Chancell, in the which there was one fair large gilt image of the *Holy Trinity*, being Patron of the Church" (Neale's *Views of Churches*, ii. 12).

the parish, is stated[1] to have been on the north side. It has been argued, however, that it was the image of Our Lady, not that of the patron, which normally occupied a position north of the altar. Two alleged proofs of this have been brought forward.[2] One is that Thomas Wyndsor, in 1479, left instructions to the following effect: "My body to be buried on the *north* side of the quire, before the image of Our Lady."[3] Again, Lady Townsend, in 1499, ordered her body "to be buried by the high altar, before our Blessed Lady, in the chancel, and a new tomb to be made, upon which tomb to be cunningly graven a sepulchre for Easter day."[4] And as the Easter sepulchre was always set up on the north side of the chancel, it follows that the image of Our Lady here was on the north side. In reply to which it is to be observed, first, that the church in which Thomas Wyndsor was buried was that of St Mary, Stanwell, Middlesex, and that Lady Townsend was buried at Rainham St Mary, Norfolk. Both churches then were dedicated to Our Lady, and it was because she was patron of the church that her image in each church was placed on a bracket on the north side of the altar. Horman says[5] that "the ymage of the patron of the churche must stand on the ryght hande of the auter"; by this no doubt he means the heraldic "right," *i.e.*, the north end of the altar. We come to the conclusion, therefore, that the normal position for the image of the saint to whom a church was dedicated was on the north side of the chancel.

What is true of the position of the patron saint as regards the high altar is true also of the position of the images of saints to whom altars were dedicated elsewhere in the church. At Long Melford it is recorded that there was an image of Our

[1] See a Constitution of Archbishop Winchelsey (1292-1313) in Lyndwood, 1679 edition, p. 253: *Ut parochiani* "Precipimus quod teneantur invenire omnia inferius notata, viz. . . . Imagines in ecclesia. Imaginem principalem in cancello." Lyndwood's glosses are *In ecclesia*, "in corpore ecclesiæ"; *Imaginem principalem*, "illius sancti ad cujus honorem ecclesia consecrata est; quod intellige, ubi talis imago est imaginabilis." Lyndwood then goes on to discuss certain legal doubts as to such patrons as "All Saints" and the "Blessed Trinity," or dedications to more than one saint, *e.g.*, SS. Peter and Paul, or SS. Cosmas and Damian.

[2] Rock's *Church of Our Fathers*, vol. iii. p. 79 note; see also 219, 222 (note 87), 254.

[3] Sir N. H. Nicholas's *Testamenta Vetusta*, i. 352.

[4] Parkin's *Norfolk*, vii. 132.

[5] Rock, iii. 222.

Lord in the Jesus aisle,[1] and that it was on the north side of the altar. Where there was a Lady chapel, the image of Our Lady would be set up at the north end of her altar. At Coughton, in Warwickshire,[2] Sir R. Throckmorton in 1518 devised that the image of Our Lady should be set up at the north side of the end of the altar in the south aisle; this altar, no doubt, was in the Lady chapel of the church.[3]

Altar Beam

Above the altar was sometimes placed a beam. Its ends were inserted in the north and south walls of the chancel, or it rested on brackets inserted in the east wall, or, as at Chelsham, Surrey, where the supports remain, on shafts with capital and base. Jocelyn de Brakelond (p. 79) says that Archbishop Stigand (1052-1072) gave to St Edmund's abbey at Bury "the great beam which used to be on the other side of the altar." At Rochester cathedral, in the thirteenth century, behind the high altar "was a wall or reredos of some kind extending from side to side, and over this was the beam which Richard of Walden the sacrist wrought with his own hands, with the apostles carved upon it and a figure of St Andrew standing above." There was also a "bust with the body of Our Lord" standing over the high altar, till it was confiscated in 1215 by King John.[4] At Durham reliquaries stood on the altar beam; and other reliquaries, some of which were horns, were suspended from it by chains.[5] In the twelfth century, according to the monk Gervase, in Canterbury cathedral, "at the eastern horns of the altar were two wooden columns, highly ornamented with gold and silver, which supported a great beam, the ends of which beam rested upon the capitals of the two pillars. The beam, placed across the church, and decorated with gold, supported the Majesty of the Lord, the images of St Dunstan and St Elphege; also seven shrines, decorated with gold and silver, and filled with the relics of many saints." An illumination in a MS. now at Trinity Hall,

[1] "There was also in my Ile (the Martin aisle), called Jesus Ile, two fair gilt tabernacles, from the ground up to the roofe, with a fair *Image of Jesus* in the Tabernacle at the north end of the Altar, and in the Tabernacle at the south end the Image of Our Lady of Pitty" (Neale, *ibid.*).

[2] Rock, iii. 222.

[3] For the above account of the position of the images of the patron and Our Lady, the writer is indebted to Rev. S. J. M. Price, D.D.

[4] Hope's *Rochester*, p. 116.

[5] Rock's *Church of Our Fathers*, iii. 471.

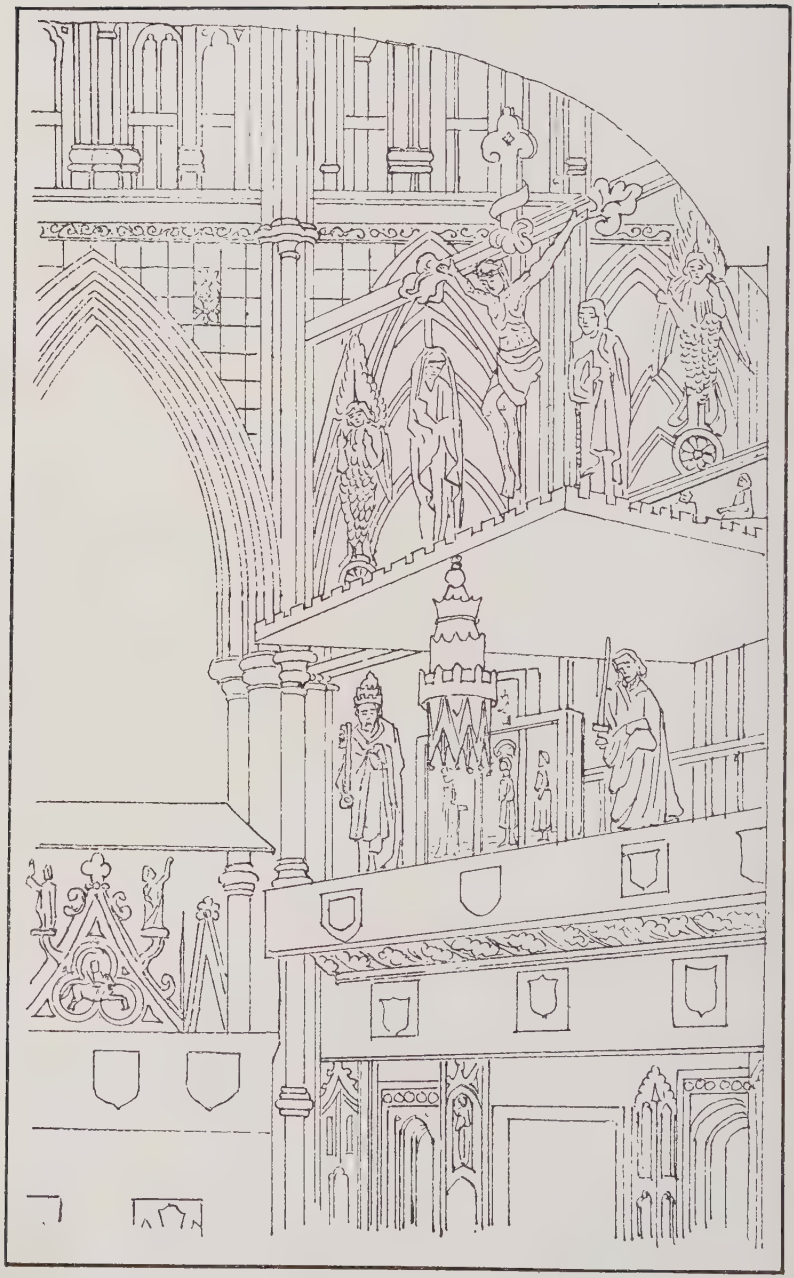
Cambridge, shows at St Augustine's, Canterbury, a wooden beam supported by two small columns. On it in the centre is our Lord in Majesty, with a reliquary on either hand, one of which contains the relics of St Leotardus; the reliquaries are flanked by statuettes of angels.[1] The Islip Roll shows that, at Westminster, high up above the altar tester canopy, were two beams; the upper one formed the transverse arm of a great crucifix; to the lower beam were affixed the vertical beam of the crucifix, a Mary and John, and two seraphim on their wheels. Recently, at St Martin's, Chipping Ongar, two holes for an altar beam, each 14 in. square, were discovered about 4½ ft. from the east end of the church, and about 5 ft. above the present level of the churchyard. This, no doubt, supported an image or images. References to altar beams occur in wills and inventories, and it appears that they were used not only to support images and reliquaries, but also candles and lamps. And they were employed in various parts of the church, and not used exclusively at the back of the altar.

Relics

As has been pointed out above, worship in the catacombs in times of persecution had familiarised the early Christians with the association of the altar slab with the sarcophagi of the more famous of the martyrs of the Church. When peace came in 312 A.D., the Church set to work at once to build above ground magnificent renderings of the *arcisolium* and *cubiculum* of the catacombs. St Peter's, St Paul *extra muros*, S. Lorenzo, S. Agnese, Rome, and many another great basilica were but glorified versions of the chambers of the catacombs; and down beneath their high altars there reposed the bodies of St Peter, St Paul, St Laurence, St Agnes, and the rest.[2] What was done at Rome was copied throughout Western Christendom. Everywhere, where there was a local martyr of repute, an altar was built above his relics, and over the altar a church. Crypts were constructed, most of all in Italy, their birthplace; but also far away, even in Saxon England, the relics of many a saint were entombed in the crypt; above ground rose the high altar. Or, on a minor scale, a small excavation or *confessio* was dug below, and the altar was built above it.

[1] See reproduction in Alcuin Tract, No. 1.

[2] Even when the churches of St Peter (Vatican) and St Paul *extra muros* were rebuilt, the high altar retained its original position above the *confessio* of the martyr. In the case of the former it was necessary in the present church to place it away from the axis of the nave.



The Reredos in 1532 (Islip Roll)

Not every church, however, was fortunate enough to possess the whole corpus of a saint of its own: at Rome a St Peter, at Tours a St Martin, at Durham a St Cuthbert. But in Rome there were great accumulations of relics: which, owing to constant incursions of barbarians, had been removed for safety into the city. In 756 Pope Paul I. had removed from the catacombs more than a hundred bodies of martyrs: in 817 Pope Paschal I. removed the bones of thousands to S. Prassede. Moreover, the practice of dismemberment came in - arms, legs, skulls, fingers were separated and dispatched to different destinations; and there can have been few important churches in Western Europe but by buying, by exchange, by begging, or by less reputable means, had acquired sacred relics.[1] Portions of these relics, following the tradition of the catacomb, the crypt, and the *confessio*, were very generally deposited beneath, or within, or on the high altar. In the greater churches the accumulations of relics were very extensive, and in some cases we are expressly told that they were deposited inside the high altar, *e.g.*, in several cases in North Africa. At La Morera, near Lafra, Spain, is an inscription:—

"SUNT IN HOC ALTARIO
SACRI ESTEPHA RELIQUIAE."

At St Miguel de Escalada, in the province of Leon, Spain, are two altars with similar inscriptions of the sixth or seventh century.[2] One reads—

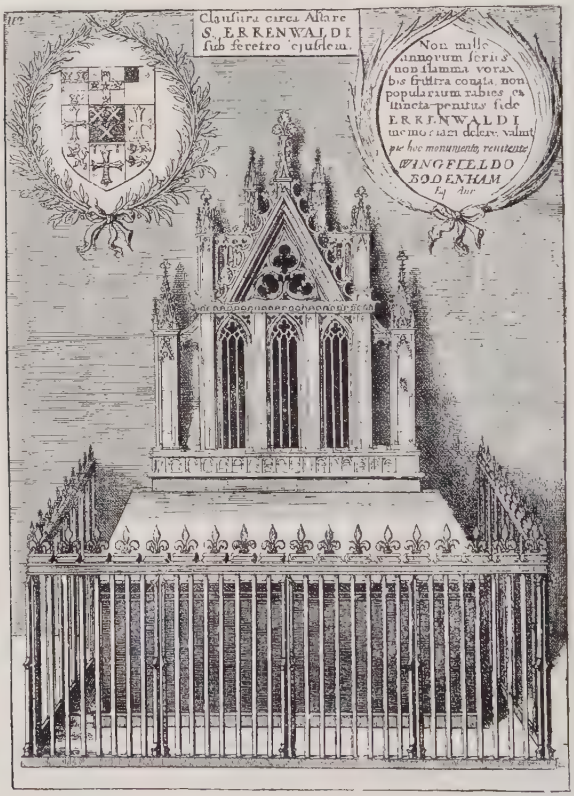
"HIC SUNT RELIQUIE RECONDITE
SANCTE MARINE
ET SANCTE CECILIE
ET SANCTI ACISCLI
ET SANCTI CHRISTOFORI
ET SANCTE COLUMBE."

Different methods, no doubt, were adopted for the preservation of the altar relics. As has been said, the greater relics might be entombed in a crypt or *confessio* beneath the altar. In the early days, when the Apocalypse was composed, this practice was already in use. For the words, "I saw *under the altar* the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held," can but refer to the relics of saints deposited in a *confessio* or a crypt beneath an altar.

[1] Bede speaks of priests journeying to Rome to get relics to place in their churches.

[2] Cabrol's *Dictionnaire*, col. 3170.

Or if there was no crypt or *confessio* the sarcophagus or feretory of the saint was sometimes placed east and west, with its west end backing to and joined on to the rear of the altar. This was the case with the shrines of St Erkenwald in St Paul's, London, and of St Richard at Chichester; and originally of St Oswin at Tynemouth, and St Alban at St Albans. Later,



W. H.

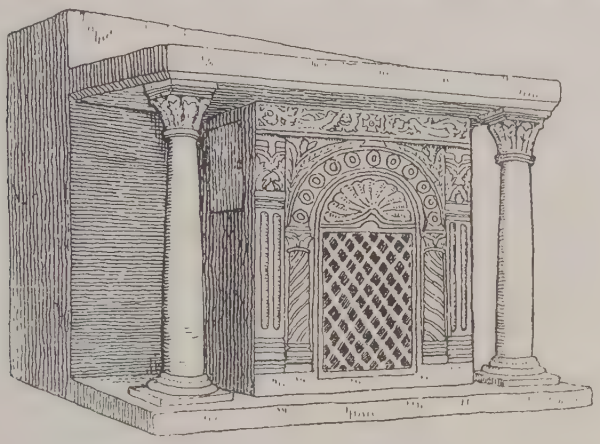
St Erkenwald's Shrine

the shrine was usually detached from the altar; but still it was to the east of it, and but a little distance away.

Sometimes a masonry altar was hollow, constructed with slabs; and in the hollow was placed a reliquary containing relics. Sometimes, as is clearly shown in S. Giorgio in Velabro (22), and St Alexander,[1] Rome, instead of the front slab

[1] The latter is illustrated in *Archæologia*, 1866, Plate VIII.

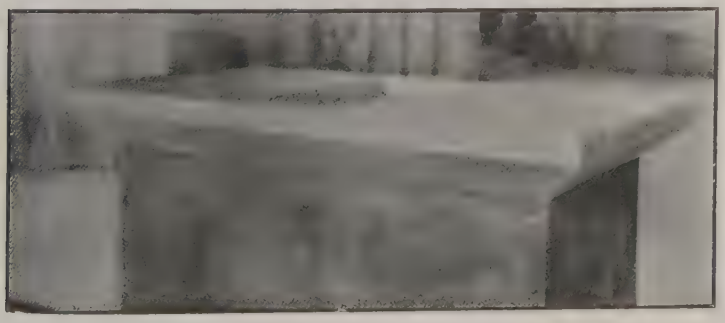
there was a grille through which the reliquary could be seen. Where the altar was of table shape, a reliquary is sometimes represented placed open to view between the legs beneath



D. E.

Ravenna: S. Giovanni i Fonte

the slab; *e.g.*, at S. Giovanni i Fonte, Ravenna. Where the relic was small, it was sometimes deposited in a small cavity hewn out of the surface of the *mensa*; to secure it, a small



F. B.

Montmajour

stone of the size of the cavity was cemented over it, or else a second slab covered the whole of the lower slab. A good example remains on the floor of the presbytery of St David's cathedral; on the top of a large slab is let in a smaller slab or

"seal," $14\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 9 in., marked with the usual quintette of crosses; it seems to be a picked piece of Caerfai stone.[1] An altar slab with a similar "seal" has been unearthed in the Jesus chapel of Norwich cathedral,[2] where the *mensa* is of grey Barnack stone, while the "seal" is of Purbeck marble. At Jervaulx abbey an altar remains, in front of which is an opening formerly closed by a square stone; the opening was probably the repository of a relic (34). At Rievaulx is an altar, probably 1156-1200, built in four courses, and with a slab marked with five crosses, which is 6 ft. 4 in. long, 3 ft. 4 in. broad, and 5 ft. $3\frac{1}{4}$ in. high, and 8 in. from the wall; in the middle of the highest course of masonry and under the slab is a *loculus* for the

J. L.

Jervaulx Abbey, Yorkshire

reception of relics. At Roche abbey a stone was found, 9 in. square; with a rough sinking on the top filled with clay. When the clay was removed, it was found that there was beneath it a small stone or "seal"; and when the seal was removed, there were seen a splinter of bone, with some smaller fragments of dust, and a small iron ring broken in two pieces.[3] These are the only relics that have been found in an English

[1] P. A. Robson in Bell's *St David's*, p. 42.

[2] It is possible that these cavities in the *mensa* may have contained, not relics, but a superaltar. When the "seal" was removed from the Norwich *mensa*, nothing was found beneath.

[3] *Proceedings of Society of Antiquaries*, 2nd series, xi. 245.

altar.[1] In the south-east angle of the crypt of Grantham church is a stone altar, having a slab with a molded edge, and a large square aperture in the front below intended to contain relics, or a reliquary; or to be closed up with a slab as a receptacle for relics.[2] The same arrangement occurs beneath the altar slab of the sacristy of Westborough, Lincolnshire (5). At Ashbourne, Derbyshire, in removing the soil at the east end of the chancel where the altar formerly stood, a small oblong coffer of stone about a foot in length was found.[3] This may have been placed beneath the altar. It is now in the Cokayne chapel.

There is a cavity for a "seal" in a large altar slab now in the porch of Callington, Cornwall; as also in the slab of the Holy chapel, Madron Well, Cornwall; this last is 9 in. by 8 in.[4] Not only relics were enclosed, but also three portions of the Sacrament, and three of incense, according to a Pontifical of Egbert, who was consecrated Archbishop of York in 732;[5] or sometimes fragments of the Gospel, or napkins which had touched relics.

Sometimes, however, relics were simply enclosed in a reliquary, and placed *on* the *mensa*. This was not so in the first eight centuries of the Church, during which nothing was placed on the altar except the mystic oblation, the cup, the paten, and the linen cloth, except perhaps the Book of the Gospels, till the Gospel had been read. But a Pastoral, quoted as that of Pope Leo IV. (847-855), says, "Let nothing be placed on the altar but '*capsa*' *with relics of the saints*, or perchance the four holy gospels of God, or a pyxis with the Body of Our Lord as a viaticum for the sick." Such then were some of the various ways in which the ancient tradition of the sarcophagus —altar of the catacombs—was kept alive.

Nevertheless, it is not to be supposed that the presence of relics was of necessity for the consecration of an English altar. The great canonist, Lyndwood, quotes a curious pastoral of Stephen, Archbishop of Canterbury (1207-1228), to the effect that where no relics are to be had at the consecration of an altar, worn-out "corporal" cloths may be encased in the altar instead of relics.[6] Hence, says Lyndwood, relics "non sunt de

[1] The bodies of the Confessor at Westminster and of St Candida at Whitchurch Canonicorum, remain in their shrines.

[2] *Associated Societies' Reports*, ix. 7, and *St Paul's Eccles. Soc.*, ii. 313.

[3] Bloxam's *Gothic Architecture*, ii. 147.

[4] Cox and Harvey, p. 4.

[5] "Deinde ponit tres portiones corporis domini in confessione et tres de incenso, et recluduntur intus reliquiæ."

[6] "Vetera quoque corporalia, quæ non fuerint idonea, in altaribus, quando consecrantur, loco reliquiarum reponantur."

substantia consecrationis altaris." Moreover, though there is a Pontifical "Reconditio reliquiarum," to be used where relics are to be deposited in an altar, it is expressly directed that this particular service is to be omitted where there are no relics.[1] Nor in a Pontifical of the fourteenth century, entitled "Consecratio altaris," is there any mention of the deposition of relics in the altar. We may fairly conclude that comparatively few of the high altars in English churches had relics deposited in or on them, and that this was probably still more the case with minor altars. Indeed in some instances, *e.g.*, the two chantries founded in Crich church, Derbyshire, in 1357 and 1368, it is known that the altars were not even consecrated; small "superaltars," duly consecrated, being laid on the altar slab at the celebration of Mass. That such superaltars were here employed is certain; for the inventories of each chantry commence with the entry of a "superaltar."[2]

Superaltars

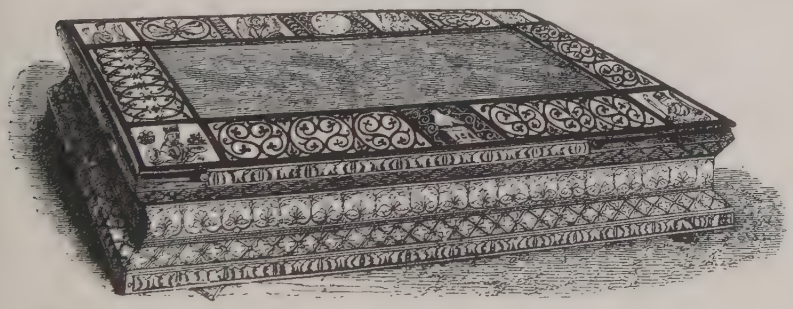
Various examples of portable altars remain in museums and cathedral treasuries. The use goes back to very early days. In the mansions at Rome the Christian altar was often a movable table of wood; three-legged tables of wood bearing the cup and the host are represented in a fresco of the catacombs of Calixtus and elsewhere. And during times of persecution, small movable altars may well have been employed at Mass in the catacombs. This is borne out by the precautions which St Cyprian enjoins on priests so that they may not be seen celebrating the Eucharist in prisons.[3] Portable altars were required also by ecclesiastics on long journeys, by armies of Crusaders and others, and continued to be made; only they were now made of stone, usually of some rare stone. Several of these diminutive altars remain, and are attributed by consistent tradition to various saints, in some cases no doubt correctly. Such are the miniature stone altars of Constantine, formerly at Clairvaux; the porphyry altar of St Maurice, A.D. 286, at Sieburg, Prussia; the serpentine altars of S. Geminiano, 349, at Modena; of St Servais, 384, at Maastricht; and of St Martin, 397, at St Stephen, Troyes; that of St Loup, 479, at St Loup, Troyes; those of St Gregory, 604, of serpentine and porphyry, at Sieburg and Paderborn. At Jarrow there used to be a

[1] "Si reliquiæ non habentur, omittendum est officium illorum."

[2] Cox and Harvey, p. 7.

[3] Cabrol's *Dictionnaire*, I. ii. 3187.

portable altar of serpentine which had belonged to Bede. Here and there the older custom survived. Thus the portable altar found in the coffin of St Cuthbert of Durham[1] was of wood, plated with silver. It was a wooden tablet about six inches square; doubtless that which was seen when the coffin was opened in 1054, and which was then replaced.[2] On it are two crosses and a dedication to St Peter. In the twelfth century were found the remains of St Acca, Bishop of Hexham in 649. On his breast lay a small tablet of two pieces of wood fastened together with silver nails: "inventa est super pectus ejus *tabula* lignea in modum altaris facta ex duobus lignis, clavis argenteis conjuncta."[3] Bede[4] says that two priests who went as missionaries to the Anglo-Saxons took with them "sacred vessels and a consecrated



J. H. P.

Superaltar

slab for an altar." St Willibrod carried with him a portable altar on his missionary journeys through Frisia; so also the priests who accompanied Charlemagne on his campaigns a wooden altar, *lignea tabula*, which they covered with a linen cloth at the Eucharist.

The diminutive altars which had been used by famous men became increasingly venerated as time rolled on, and in the ninth century and onward were often richly cased; *e.g.*, Charles the Bald framed in gold the porphyry altar of St Denis. Various materials were utilised to form the slab of a superaltar. At

[1] See Raine's *St Cuthbert.*

[2] "Vident librum evangiliorum ad caput supra *tabulam* positum, ipsamque tabulam tribus per transversum positis sustentari ligneolis."

[3] Simeon of Durham, *ob.* 1129.

[4] *Eccles. History*, v. 10.

York there was one of jasper, another of red marble; at Canterbury one of chalcedony;[1] at St Paul's one of slate. Two mentions occur in 1338 of "tables de yban (ebony) pro superaltars." The ebony probably is simply the wooden frame or case of the slab; great stress was laid on the slab being so framed. Among Leofric's gifts to Exeter cathedral was "1 geboned altare." At Durham there were two of jet: "duo de gete nigro." The favourite material was jasper, which in Christian symbolism indicated faith:—

> "Jasper colore viridi
> Præfert virorem fidei."

Of English superaltars one of the most famous was "a superaltare garnished with silver and gilte, and partly golde, called the Great Saphire of Glastonbury." William of Malmesbury says that it was one of the four gifts received by St David from the patriarch of Jerusalem when he had gone on pilgrimage there and was consecrated bishop. The four gifts were an altar, a bell, a pastoral staff, and a tunic; and as these might have been burdensome to St David on his long homeward journey, they were conveyed to St David's by angels. This superaltar was presented to Glastonbury abbey by St David himself. In the South Kensington Museum is a portable altar of Purbeck marble, found with church plate and a set of vestments at a farm near Abbey Dore, where it had probably been concealed at the Reformation and then forgotten. It is of Purbeck marble, and is $8\frac{5}{8}$ in. long, $5\frac{15}{16}$ in. broad, and $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch thick. A superaltar found at Calder abbey is $10\frac{1}{8}$ in. long, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. broad, and $\frac{3}{4}$ in. thick; the upper edge has a bevel of $\frac{1}{2}$ in., the slab is therefore not a "seal." On it are five "bourdonnées" or knobbed crosses. A broken superaltar was found at Lanercost; when perfect it would be $11\frac{1}{4}$ in. long and 9 in. broad; it has five cross-crosslets bourdonnées. In the South Kensington Museum are three German portable altars; the two from Hildesheim are work of the twelfth century; the third is *c.* 1200.

In various ways it was found convenient for a church to possess one or more superaltars. When an altar was of wood, a small slab of stone could be framed into it, and on this slab the act of consecration took place. Sometimes, too, Mass was celebrated in the open; and since it was forbidden to celebrate it except on a duly consecrated altar, it was convenient to employ

[1] "Altare gestatorium de lapide chalcedonio."

a superaltar. There is definite evidence as to the practice at Boston. In 1510 Pope Julius II. gave the guild of St Botolph permission "to carie about with them an aultar stone, whereby they might have a priest to saie them masse or other divine service, where they would, without prejudice of any other church or chapel, though it were also before day, yea and at iij of the clock after midnight in the summer time. Item, that having their aultar stone, they might have masse said *in any place, though it were unhallowed.*"

The portable altar or "super-altare" is often mentioned in wills. At first the concession to have such a one was difficult and costly, having to be obtained direct from Rome. In 1251 Pope Innocent IV. permitted the Countess of Lincoln, "because of her generosity to the Church, to have an *altare portabile*, on which the Holy Office should be celebrated for her and hers." In the middle of the fifteenth century the Archbishop of York obtained a concession of ten portable altars for various people. Later they became quite common In 1503 Lady Hastings bequeathed two superaltars, one white, one black. In 1534 the guild of St Mary, Boston, had no less than five superaltars, "wherof four of them be closyd in wood." In 1538 Westminster abbey had three superaltars, one of which was a "great superaltare sett in paynted tymber . . . the stone thereof of the collour of blak jasper." In 1493 there was paid at St Mary-at-Hill, London, "for making of the crossys on the superaltarys iiijd." In 1526 John Holcum gave to the church of Morebath, "a superaltar yblessyd," price iijs. iiijd.[1] In 1530 John Paroyn left his altar to All Saints, Northampton, "the which aulter is garnished with burnyshed golde, sett golde and with imagery worke"; this was no doubt a superaltar.[2]

At times a cavity was hollowed in a slab to hold a superaltar: examples occur in a chapel of Le Puy cathedral, and in St Robert's cave, Knaresborough. Usually the cavity is rectangular; but in the chapel of the Pyx, Westminster, there is a circular sinking; there was formerly preserved at St Albans a circular superaltar.

At the consecration of a superaltar the bishop poured out on the slab the holy oil and chrism, and burned incense upon it, little grains of which had been strewn at the middle and at the four corners. To get fire for burning the incense, wax tapers were cut, as they are to this day, into short lengths, and two of

[1] Dr Cox's *Churchwardens' Accounts*, pp. 93, 125.

[2] Serjeantson and Longden's "Northants Wills," in *Archæological Journal*, lxx., 230.

them laid crosswise upon each heap of incense, and then lighted at the four ends all at the same moment.[1]

Number of Altars

In the earliest Christian churches there was undoubtedly but one apse, and but one altar. In the first century St Ignatius says in unambiguous terms: "There is one bread broken for all; one cup given to all, and one altar only in every church"; and again, "One bishop, one altar." Eusebius, in the fourth century, describing the new church at Tyre, speaks of one altar only. It is not till the fifth century that a plurality of altars can be proved to exist. Constantine's church of St Cross had, in the fifth century, not only the high altar and two side altars, but four other altars also in the angles of the building. In the sixth century Gregory of Tours mentions three altars at Braisnes; at Saintes, in the sixth century, the bishop had placed in the church no less than thirteen altars, of which four were not consecrated for lack of relics. Bede says that in his time (*c.* 700) there were three altars in the church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, facing south, north, and west. St Aldhelm, in a poem of 725, says that the Princess Bugge built a church with thirteen altars. A poem of Alcuin speaks of York cathedral as having no less than thirty altars: "Quæ triginta tenet variis ornatibus aras."

In the ninth century St Aldric, who became bishop in 832, introduced ten altars in the cathedral of Le Mans. At St Gall there are said to have been seventy altars. The excessive multiplication of altars became an intolerable nuisance; and in 805 Charlemagne laid down that "*non superabundent in ecclesia.*" The plans of Durham and Salisbury cathedrals show a plenitude of altars.[2] It would seem that no English parish church had less than three altars; *e.g.*, at Shere, Surrey, there was the high altar of the patron saint, St James, that of the Lady chapel, and that of the chapel of St Nicholas. Many

[1] Rock, i. 246; and Exeter Pontifical, p. 30. The service for the consecration of a superaltar, "Benedictio Lapidis Portabilis," is given in the York Pontifical, published by the Surtees Society. In the Pontifical of Clifford, Bishop of London, 1406-1436, a drawing shows a bishop standing in front of an altar; on the altar lie the small square slabs to be consecrated, with five little crosses on each.

[2] Plan of Durham in Dr Fowler's edition of the *Rites of Durham*, and of Salisbury by Canon Wordsworth in *Introduction to English Church Architecture*, by Francis Bond, p. 131.

churches had considerably more. At St Michael's, Cornhill, E.C., there were six altars; for in 1549 there was paid "to ye mason in Gracyous strete for takying downe vj aulters, xvjs. xd." At St Lawrence, Reading, between 1410 and 1518, there is mention of no less than twelve altars; viz., St Lawrence (the high altar), the Jesus altar, the altars of St John Baptist, St Blaise, St Thomas, St George, St Nicholas, The Trinity, St Clement, and the altar of the Sepulchre.[1] Collegiate, monastic, and cathedral churches had more still. In the collegiate church of Arundel, Sussex, four of the stone altars still remain. In churches served by a large staff of Cistercian priests, there was a special reason for the multiplicity of altars in their churches; viz., that every priest had to celebrate a Mass daily, and that before midday. If the altars were few, it would be difficult to arrange for each priest to have his turn. The arrangements at Fountains are a case in point. At first the monks of this and the other Cistercian convents were nearly all laymen; later, it became usual for them to take Holy Orders. The result was that more altars had to be built, and at Fountains a new transept, the famous Chapel of the Nine Altars, to hold the new altars. This is expressly given as the reason by the chronicler of Fountains, who says that in the time of Abbot John of York, 1203-1211, there were not enough altars to go round: "altaria pauciora ad celebrandum."[2] The Fountains plan was copied a few years later at Durham, where also there is an eastern transept which held nine altars all in a row.

The need for more altars than one may be partly due to a general observance of the rule which is still observed in the Greek Church, that an altar shall not be used for the Eucharist more than once a day.[3] This would lead to the addition of other altars, first in side chapels and afterwards in the nave and other parts of the church. This seems originally to have been the rule in the Western Church also; at any rate, the Council of Auxerre in 578 forbade the celebration of two Masses on the same altar on the same day. At certain periods, however, especially at Easter, a single celebration must have been altogether inadequate. Indeed, at Alexandria, owing to the insufficiency of altars, the population threatened that they would go into the open country to celebrate Easter.[4]

[1] Dr Cox's *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 91.

[2] Hope's *Fountains*, p. 8.

[3] In the West this eventually only held good of an altar at which the bishop had celebrated.—S. J. M. P.

[4] Cabrol's *Dictionnaire*, col. 3185.

Position of Altar

In a small church or in a chapel the high altar usually backed on to the east wall; in a cathedral, monastic, or collegiate church it was almost always isolated. When the chancel of a parish church was lengthened, as was so very often the case, its high altar was moved back to the new east wall. But in a cathedral, monastic, or collegiate church, in spite of repeated lengthenings eastward, the position of the high altar usually remained unaltered; especially where there was below it a *confessio* or vault, which gave to it its sanctity. There are, however, exceptions; *e.g.*, the high altar of Canterbury stood much more to the west in Lanfranc's cathedral.[1]

In a small church the lateral altars were placed in the eastern bays of the aisles; or, if there were no aisles, in the two eastern corners of the nave. Of the latter position, Patricio, Ranworth, Peterchurch, and Urishay afford examples. At Patricio, Brecknock, and Ranworth, Norfolk, one altar is placed on each side of the entrance to the chancel, westward of and against the rood screen (11). At Peterchurch and Urishay, Hereford, also, the altars occupy this position, but there are no screens. At Tattershall, Lincolnshire (10), Southwell minster, and Exeter cathedral, the stone screen is built with western recesses for two side altars. At St David's there is an altar on the north side of the screen (43). In some churches recesses for an altar occur in the responds of the chancel arch;[2] *e.g.*, at Barfreston, Kent; Castle Rising and Melton Constable, Norfolk (44); Boarhunt, Hants; Iffley and Stanton Harcourt and Chipping Norton,[3] Oxon. Sometimes in later days these recesses have been pierced so as to give a better view of the altar, perhaps when aisles had been added and the side altars removed into their eastern bays. The westernmost bays of aisles also sometimes had altars; at Addlethorpe, Lincolnshire, they retain the parclose screens which converted them into chapels. In the eastern bay of both aisles at Theddlethorpe All Saints, and in that of the south aisle of North Somercotes, Lincolnshire, altar slabs with consecration crosses remain: and the south aisle of Enstone, Oxfordshire (45).

[1] For the original position of high altars under central lanterns see *Gothic Architecture in England*, p. 592.

[2] Such altar recesses are by no means uncommon. Mr P. M. Johnston reports sixteen in Sussex of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, most of them under semicircular arches.

[3] Illustrated in *Gothic Architecture in England*, p. 548, where the reredos of the altar is shown.

F. R. P. S.

St David's Cathedral

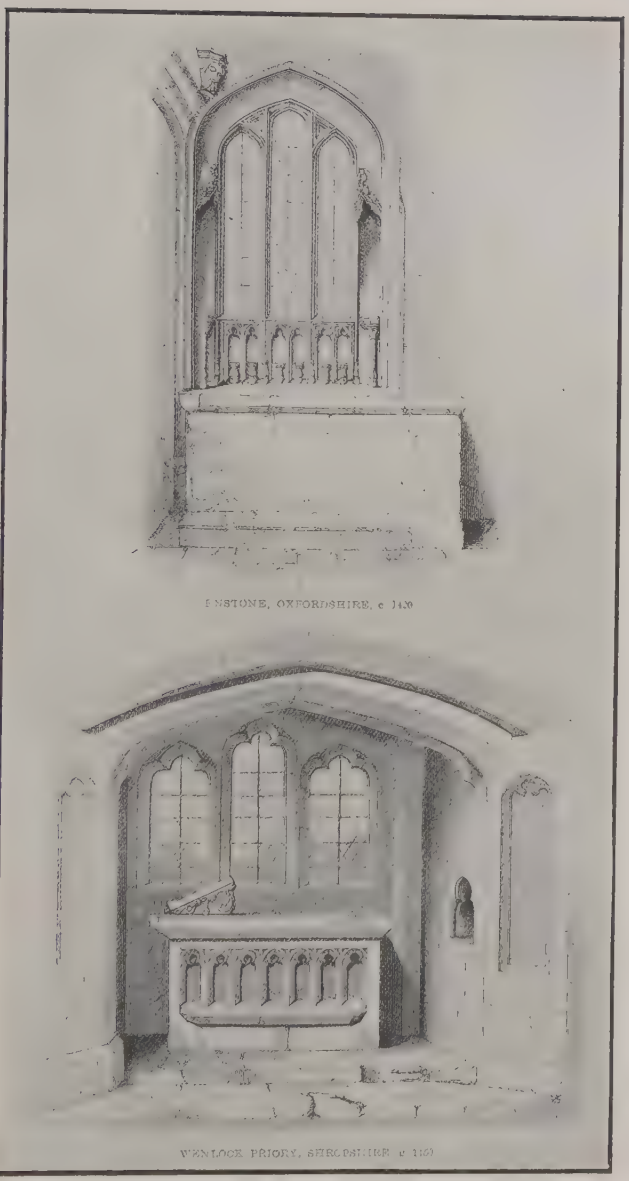
Sometimes even the central bays of an aisle were screened off to serve as an altared chapel. In Durham cathedral the second, third, and fourth bays from the east of the south aisle of the nave were screened off as the Neville chapel. In parish churches also chapels were sometimes screened off in the middle of an aisle; *e.g.*, at Shere, Surrey; and when a chantry endowment was attached to such a chapel, the family which provided the endowment sometimes put in a much larger window to

H. B. P.

Melton Constable, Norfolk

improve the lighting of their altar, filling it perhaps with heraldic glass. The presence of such a window is always a presumption of the former existence of a chantry chapel within the aisle; as also is the survival of raised platforms, *e.g.*, those of four altars which have now disappeared from the nave of Sall church, Norfolk.

Chapels were also built out in all sorts of positions, the favourite position being alongside the chancel. As a rule, the builders avoided carrying the chapel along to the extreme east end of the chancel, being anxious not to spoil the lighting of the



ENSTONE, OXFORDSHIRE, c 1420

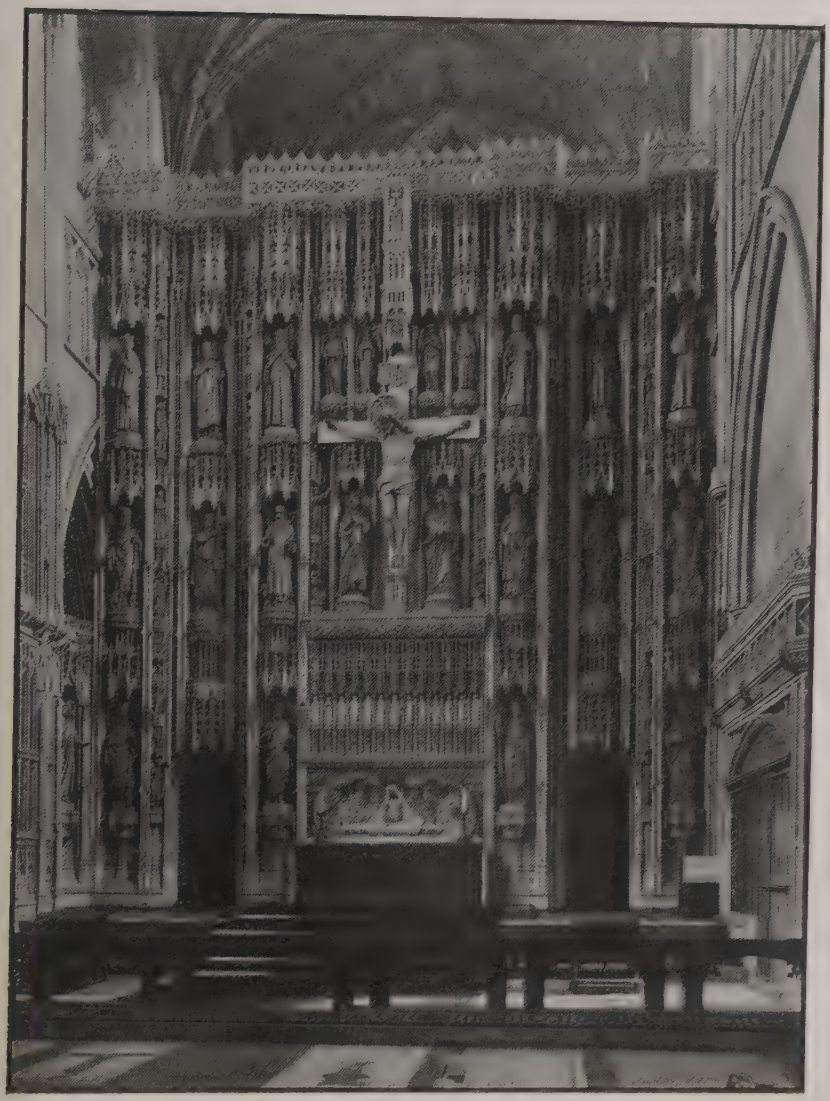
WENLOCK PRIORY, SHROPSHIRE c 1160

I. H. P.

high altar; *e.g.*, at Shere and Merstham, Surrey; but there are many exceptions. An altar remains in the chapel of the Prior's lodging at Wenlock (45). Transepts also were built to hold altars; the central transept, as at Lincoln minster; the eastern transept, as at Lincoln, Worcester, Hereford, Fountains; the western transept, as at Ely and Wells. At St Albans, Kirkstall, Citeaux, and Ebrach, altars backed on to the massive piers of the nave (71). Such pier-altars were very frequently screened off in nave and choir. To the more important tombs, especially to the chantry tombs, altars were often attached at the west end; *e.g.*, that of Lord Marney at Layer Marney, Essex.[1] Altars occur too in vestries; *e.g.*, at Adderbury, Oxford; Warmington and Shotteswell, Warwick; Claypole, Notts.; in all these four the altars survive. Piscinas occur in porches; *ergo* altars; *e.g.*, Melton Mowbray, Leicester. In the chamber above a porch there was sometimes an altar; the upper room of the south porch of Sall was a Lady chapel, for underneath the modern whitewash the letter M appears; also the piscina and the shelf of the aumbry remain. There were even altars sometimes in the rood lofts; where rood loft and screen alike have disappeared, the survival of the piscina tells the story.[2] In the triforium chambers of choirs and transepts of the greater churches, altars were sometimes placed, *e.g.*, in all the five upper chapels of Gloucester cathedral; the easternmost of these altars, in a mutilated condition, may still be seen above the entrance to the Lady chapel. At Penkevel St Michael, Cornwall, there was an altar in the tower, perhaps because it was usual to build an altar to St Michael in high places; *e.g.*, St Michael's chapel, Le Puy, on the top of a needle of volcanic rock, and the St Michael's Mounts in Cornwall and Brittany. At Christchurch, Hampshire, when the Lady chapel was built, the walls were carried up so as to provide a low chamber above the vault and beneath the roof; it still goes by the name of St Michael's loft. At Brook, near Ashford, Kent, there is an altar in the tower, with a statue of Christ above. The eastern limb of Gloucester was planned in the eleventh century to have five small apsidal altars in the crypt, five on the ground floor, and five in the triforium chamber. The charnel house in front of Norwich cathedral, now the undercroft of the hall of the Grammar School, was also a chapel; in the charnel house of Grantham church the original altar still survives (5). In the greater monastic churches there were two great screens; in front of the

[1] See Bloxam, ii. 138.

[2] For these piscinas see p. 158.



C. F. N.

St Albans Cathedral

western of the two, which is still standing at St Albans (71), was a central altar, with a door on either side. This was more especially the altar of the laity. It was styled the altar of the

Holy Cross, or of the Crucifix, or of the Holy Rood, or the Rood altar, sometimes the Jesus altar. In Rochester cathedral it was dedicated to St Nicholas. Since there was such an altar, till destroyed in a modern restoration, in the collegiate church of Ottery St Mary, it is probable that others of the larger cathedral and collegiate churches also possessed this altar. There was, however, no central altar in front of the chancel screen of a parish church; it would have blocked the doorway of the screen. References are, however, made in wills to "rood altars"; *e.g.*, of Croston, Standycke, and Preston, Lancashire.[1] These are not likely to be altars on the top of the rood loft, but altars in front of one of the screens.

In addition to these altars, some of the greater churches had a *choir altar*. This enabled the high altar to be reserved for the more important services. The choir altar was placed more or less in a line with the eastern ends of the stalls; *i.e.*, between the choir proper and the presbytery.[2] This arrangement prevailed so early as 950 in the Anglo-Saxon cathedral of Canterbury. There was one in the crossing of Westminster (*c.* 1510); for Henry VII. in his will directed that Masses should be sung "at the altar under the lantern-place between the Quire and the High Altar" until his new chapel be "fully edified." At Worcester this altar was called the *medium altare*, and was dedicated in 1218 to St Peter and St Wolstan. At Bury St Edmunds, Abbot Baldewin (1065-1097) and Abbot Johannes primus (1279-1301) were buried, the former behind, the latter in front of the *parvum altare in choro*. At Ely a screen was made in 1341 to be placed *juxta altare in choro*. At Rochester the choir altar was called the *minus altare*. At Salisbury it was the altar *in medio presbyterii*. At Toledo it still remains and is called the *prime* altar. Thus a great church might have five or more central altars in a row—that of the Lady chapel; that of the saint's chapel; the high altar; the choir altar; the nave altar.

Destruction of Altars—Altar Slabs—Minor Altars

In 1550 the Council ordered Ridley, Bishop of London, and other bishops, to cause to be taken down all the altars in every church and chapel, and instead of them a table to be set up in some convenient part of the chancel, within every such church

[1] Quoted in Bloxam, ii. 141.

[2] Not in Exeter cathedral and Old St Paul's.—S. J. M. P.

or chapel. But the order was certainly not carried out everywhere, for in the Injunctions issued by Queen Elizabeth in 1559, it is definitely stated that "in some other places the altars be not yet removed." In these same Injunctions, it is ordered "that no altar be taken down, but by oversight of the curate of the church and the churchwardens or one of them at the least." But those who chose could have instead a table of wood. Before 1558, however, a great number of altars had perished; *e.g.*, in Lincolnshire the returns to Edward the Sixth's Commissioners report that one altar slab was converted into a kitchen sink, another into a fire-back, another into a cistern-bottom, another into a hearth-stone, another into a bridge over a brook, another into a stile in the churchyard, while another was converted by the parson into a pair of steps for a staircase. One at St Michael le Belfry, York, was used as a sepulchral slab by one of the mayors in 1570, and was reused by another person in 1746. Not all of the altar slabs, however, were broken up or converted to secular uses; some were laid down as pavements of the church. As the slabs had a bevelled or chamfered edge, they had to be reversed on being laid down, so as not to harbour dust. The slabs are often of Purbeck marble; and, bearing five incised crosses, are easily recognisable. When found, if they cannot be placed on the existing altar or table, they should be placed beneath it.[1]

Survival of Altar Slabs

Slabs *in situ* on their altars are rare. Arundel, Sussex, retains four original stone altars. Peterchurch, Hereford, retains three altars; viz., the high altar, and the side altars on either side of the entrance to the apse. Patricio retains three altars; viz., one on either side of the doorway of the rood screen, and one in the anker-hold or "domus reclusi" attached to the west wall of the nave. Urishay retains the side altars on either side of the entrance to the chancel. A Norman altar remains at Forthampton, Gloucester. A late twelfth-century example, with the original crosses, is to be seen at New Shoreham, Sussex (12). The high altars remain in both the little hospital chapels at Ripon; that of St Mary Magdalene rests on piers of masonry with apertures between. This hospital was founded in 1139. Another remains in the hospital at Glastonbury.

[1] Long lists of altar slabs that have been so found are given in Bloxam's *Gothic Architecture*, ii. 145; Ecclesiological Society's *Handbook of English Ecclesiology*, p. 46; Cox and Harvey's *English Church Furniture*, p. 8.

Survival of Minor Altars

Minor altars more commonly survive. The following have been noted :—

Adderbury, Oxon. ; vestry.
Asthall, Oxon. ; north chapel.
Bedale, Yorkshire ; undercroft.
Belper, Derby ; chapel of St John Baptist.
Bengeworth, Worcester ; north aisle.
Broughton Castle chapel.
Chipping Norton, Oxon. ; north chapel.
Christchurch, Hants ; Lady chapel.
Claypole, Lincolnshire ; sacristy.
Compton Wynyates, Warwick ; private chapel.
Corton, Dorset.
Dore, Hereford ; east chapel.
Enstone, Oxon. ; south aisle (slab destroyed recently).
Gloucester, chapel east of Whispering Gallery.
Gloucester, chapel in triforium chamber.
Grantham, Lincolnshire ; undercroft.
Jervaulx abbey, Yorkshire (34).
Little Oakley, Northants ; north aisle.
Northleach, Gloucester ; north chapel.
Nunney Castle chapel.
Penkivel, Cornwall ; tower.
Rievaulx abbey, Yorkshire.
Shotteswell, Warwick ; Lady chapel.
Solihull, Warwick ; undercroft.
Tarring Neville, Sussex ; south aisle.
Tintagel, Cornwall ; south chapel.
Tichborne, Hants ; side chapel.
Warkworth hermitage, Northumberland.
Warmington, Warwick ; Lady chapel.
Wells, Somerset ; chapel of vicar's close.
Wenlock, Salop ; chapel of prior's lodgings.
Westminster ; Pyx chapel in the undercroft.

To these the *Dictionary of Architecture* adds Bridgenorth, Salop ; Dulas, Hereford ; Tideswell, Derbyshire ; Dunster, Somerset (now replaced) ; Porlock, Somerset ; Willingham, Cambridgeshire.

Mr Clinch (*Old English Churches*) adds Repton, Derbyshire ; Clapton-in-Gordano, Somerset ; Grosmont, Monmouth ; Burford, Oxon. ; Lidbury, Salop ; Compton, Surrey ; Burton Dasset, Warwickshire.

CHAPTER II

THE REREDOS

THE term reredos seems to be a contraction from the French "*areredos*" = "*arrière dos*" = "*ad retro dos*," or "*dossum*," or "*dorsum*": it answers to French "*rétable*," and the Spanish "*retablo*." It was used loosely of the back of a seat, a fire-back, or the back of an altar. Sometimes it was applied to embroidered hangings at the back of an altar. It came into common use in the fifteenth century. The term "*retable*" is synonymous with "reredos"; to apply it to the step or gradine which is occasionally found at the back of the altar slab, as is sometimes done, is productive of confusion.[1]

Reredoses are supposed not to have come into general use before the eleventh or twelfth century, and this may be true of those placed behind the high altar of the greater churches. But minor altars backing on a wall in many cases doubtless had reredoses from the very first. In the catacombs, when a cross or other symbol was painted on the back of the recess of an *arcisolium*, what was it but a reredos? Above ground, also,

[1] Gradines occur in English churches; behind the altar in Grantham crypt there is a thin slab lying on the back portion of the altar slab, forming a kind of shelf: six inches above it is another shelf in the window-sill. At the west end of the tomb of Henry VII. at Westminster there remains part of an altar shelf. At Cold Overton, Leicester, is an altar shelf enriched with moldings and carvings, and clearly intended to be seen. There are marks of another at Romsey (Micklethwaite, *Ornaments of the Rubric*, pp. 26, 73). At Clapton-in-Gordano, Somerset, is a continuous altar shelf extending the whole width of the chancel; it is molded, and contains three hollows in which are holes formerly occupied by irons which supported three statuettes, one on the north side and two on the south. The altar shelf is 5 ft. 6 in. below the base of the east window.—G. C. N. A similar shelf remains in the south chapel at Christchurch, Hants. It is probable that in all the above and similar cases the shelf was intended to support a small reredos; certainly candlesticks were not placed on it.—S. J. M. P.

very early, minor altars were constructed backing on to walls, *e.g.*, the recesses of the chapel built in the fifth century round the baptistery of St John Lateran, Rome, were too small to admit of isolated altars; and the altars must have backed on to a wall, and on this wall there would be a fresco, or mosaic, or sculpture. Above an altar in the crypt of Urbano alla Caffarella is a painted reredos of the eighth century. In the chapel of St Zeno in St Prassede, Rome, is a painted niche and altar of the ninth century.

As regards the reredos of the high altar, its origin may conceivably be found in the fact that, in some cases,[1] the great shrine and the high altar were placed back to back, the altar being placed north and south, the shrine east and west. In such a case, the western end of the shrine and its lofty pedestals formed a reredos to the high altar.

Nevertheless, long after the minor altars had come into possession of a reredos, the high altar usually had none. For this there were various reasons. In the first place, in many of the earlier Christian churches the high altar stood at the west end, and the celebrant faced the congregation; therefore, till the orientation of churches was changed, the high altar could not have a reredos. Such change of orientation did not become general till the ninth century. Again, the original position for the bishop's chair was at the back of the high altar, a position which it occupied here and there till very late days; *e.g.*, in Rheims cathedral this was its position in the thirteenth century. In such a case, if a reredos had been built close to and behind the high altar, the bishop could not have seen his people, nor could his people have seen him. In many great churches, also, a little distance east of the high altar was the shrine of the great local saint, conspicuous down to the very end of the choir; a reredos behind the altar would more or less have blocked the occupants of the stalls from view of the shrine. No wonder, then, that in the greater churches of England the reredos of the high altar, if used at all, was long kept quite low.

In our parish churches no such considerations prevented the erection of reredoses behind the high altar. In these churches there was neither western orientation, shrines behind the altar, nor bishop's throne; and so they were placed close against the

[1] *E.g.*, the shrine of St Erkenwald in St Paul's, London, and originally those of St Alban at St Albans, St Richard at Chichester, and St Oswin at Tynemouth, were so placed. See the writer's *Introduction to English Church Architecture*, p. 91. In the eleventh century such a disposition is found in the shrine and high altar of St Savin-sur-Gartempe.

eastern wall.[1] But the fact is, the English high altar had a very glorious reredos already, one of stained glass.[2] On this was depicted in vivid hues the Crucifixion or other befitting subject. The stained glass of the great east window was the English parochial reredos. This it is that explains the great

C. G.

Ludlow

[1] There are isolated examples of parochial *detached* altars. There is a curious platform over an undercroft behind the high altar of Tunstead, Norfolk, which would serve very well as a pedestal for a shrine. So also the internal vestry at the back of the high altar at Tideswell, Derbyshire, causes the altar to be 6 ft. away from the east wall. Examples of al ars with detached reredoses occur at Sawley, Derbyshire; Westleton, Suffolk; and South Petherton, Somerset (*English Church Furniture*, p. 22).

[2] This is pointed out in Mr Comper's important paper on the English altar in the *Transactions of St Paul's Ecclesiological Society.*

size of many an east window, so often out of scale to the proportions of the chancel and the church. Its sill was almost always brought down quite low; sometimes so near to the altar slab that but quite a narrow band of wall was left for a reredos. Where the band is very broad, it is because, as at Long Melford, there is a detached Lady chapel on the other side of the window;

F. B.

Castle Rising, Norfolk

or else, as at St Peter's, Mancroft, Norwich, and elsewhere, a vestry; this is quite an exceptional arrangement. Ludlow, however, has a lofty reredos in three tiers (much restored). It will be found, therefore, that the reredoses of the English parish churches occur with sufficient frequency above minor altars in the eastern ends of aisles and transepts, where the windows are usually smaller in size, but less often beneath the east window of the chancel; *e.g.*, Castle Rising, Norfolk.

F. R. P. S.

Wells Cathedral: Lady Chapel

In the greater cathedral, monastic, and collegiate churches, the high altars being detached, there was at first little scope for reredoses behind them. This was not so in their chapels. Many of these in Gothic days were loftier than most parochial chancels, and therefore there was room for a reredos without curtailing the proportions of the east window of the chapel. Accordingly, fine reredoses occur in Lady chapels, *e.g.*, in Bristol, Ely, Wells (55), and Gloucester cathedrals, and Christchurch Priory church; and in some of the minor chapels also (7). In Ely Lady chapel

W. M.

Salisbury Chantry, Christchurch

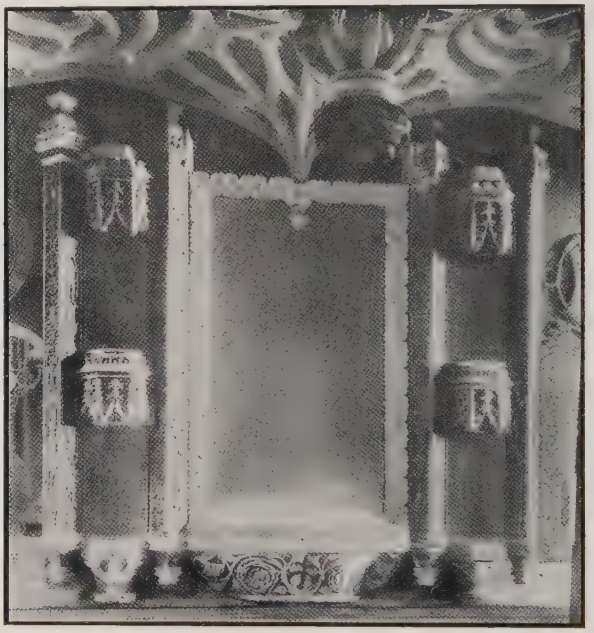
there is an ingenious compromise between the conflicting claims of reredos and east window; the summit of the reredos being originally designed to occupy the central one of the lower panels of the window instead of glass.[1] When, however, there was no eastern window at all, *e.g.*, at All Souls and New College, Oxford, where, on the other side of the east wall, is the College hall, the reredos might occupy the whole eastern wall up to the roof. So it did in several of the later chantry chapels, such as were built

[1] This originally contained an image of Our Lady, known as *Maria Salutaris*.—S. J. M. P.

G. G. B.

Worcester Cathedral: Prince Arthur's Chantry

inside the church between two piers; we possess fine specimens, though mutilated, covering the eastern walls of the chantry chapels of Bishop Seabroke at Gloucester, Lady Salisbury at Christchurch, Bishops Wykeham, Waynflete, Langton, Beaufort, Fox, and Gardiner at Winchester, Prince Arthur at Worcester, the De La Warre chantry chapel at Boxgrove, and others. Of these, that of Bishop Wykeham (*ob.* 1404) is probably the earliest, and has but a single row of statues; later, two, three,



F. B.

Boxgrove: De La Warre Chantry

or four rows of statues might be superposed, minor statuettes also being introduced. The most elaborate example left is that in the chantry chapel of Prince Arthur in Worcester cathedral.[1]

[1] On chantry chapels, see Comte Paul Biver and Mr F. E. Howard in *Bulletin Monumental*, 1908. Another treatment is seen in the aisles of Henry VII.'s chapel, Westminster, where, in St Margaret's chapel, below is a plain slab for a framed or painted reredos, and above are three statues in niches; on the left St Catherine of Alexandria, on the right St Margaret of Antioch. With this may be compared the late reredos, much restored, of

The development of the reredos took various forms in England. Where we could get it, we preferred above all things stained glass. Probably one of the earliest forms, outside of the catacombs and crypts, was the *Dossal*, or *Dorsal*, or *Upper Frontal*, as it was sometimes called, which was a hanging of silk,

D. W.

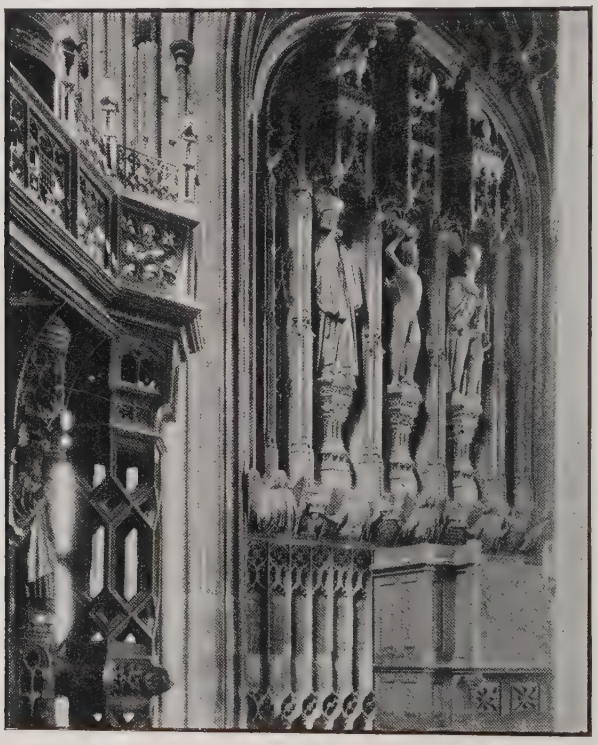
St Margaret's Chapel

damask, or other textile fabric, suspended at the back of the altar from hooks in the east wall. During the later Middle Ages it was changed with every change of the sacerdotal vestments,

the Mayor's chapel, Bristol (61). In the chapels surrounding the eastern part of the nave the eastern reredos was of painted glass, the rows of statues being relegated to the sides of the chapel (60). In the Lady chapels of Gloucester and Christchurch (7), the reredos composition comprised three parts, a reredos of glass above, and a painted reredos below, enshrined in a stone reredos, richly coloured and gilt, of niched statuettes.

so as to conform to the colour requirements of the ecclesiastical season; a custom still sometimes followed, even where dossals of picture-tapestry are employed, as in the Sistine chapel at Rome.[1]

Mention of reredoses is frequent in wills and inventories. In



F. B.

S. Sebastian

1450 Joan Buckland left to the church of Edgcote "a green apparel for the altar, that is to say, reredos and frontal powdered

[1] *Architectural Record*, v. 245. It cannot be too fully realised that, nowadays that such admirable materials are obtainable, by far the most satisfactory form of reredos is the dossal. Above all, the chilly stone reredos should be avoided. Of course, if the church is great and rich, the reredos may contain subjects in sculptured alabaster, but these should be carved and gilded; as also should any reredos in wood, which, however, is a less desirable material. An exception may be made for the late Mr George Tinworth's reredoses in red terra-cotta.

F. S.

Bristol: Mayor's Chapel

with gold, and two riddells of *green* tartaryn. Item two apparells of *white* for the two altars with riddells for Lent."[1] In 1526, at St Lawrence, Reading, there was paid £6. 14s. 4d. to the painter for painting the Transfiguration over the high altar; and received from various persons towards the gilding and painting of the Transfiguration over the high altar, £4. 13s. 1d.; it looks as if this reredos was a painting on wood or canvas.[2]

For reasons given above, the reredoses of parochial high altars, where they had reredoses, must originally have been quite low, merely a narrow band. The smallness of the space to be ornamented, therefore, allowed that the ornamentation should be in precious metals. Being in precious metals and enriched with jewels, it was desirable that the reredos should be movable, so that, when not in use, it might be kept under lock and key in the sacristy. This was the case also with many of the early frontals or "antipendia." Of these movable reredoses, the most famous is the *Pala d'Oro* of the high altar of St Mark's, Venice. It was begun in Constantinople in 977, but was not completed till 1105; it was further embellished by Doge Pietro Liani between 1205 and 1229, and again in the fourteenth century, when it also received a Gothic frame. It is composed of gold and silver, enamels and precious stones, repoussé and chiselled work. Other reredoses of this type are that from Basel cathedral in the Cluny Museum, Paris; the repoussé copper and enamelled reredos of Coblentz, and the gilded copper one in St Germain des Prés, Paris. Such precious reredoses were once to be seen in England also till the great confiscation of the treasures of our churches by the Tudor kings.

Such a reredos as that of St Mark's, Venice, with its representations of Our Lord in Majesty, the evangelists, archangels, prophets, and apostles, was quite out of the reach of the great majority of churches. But what in it was represented in silver and gold and enamel might be and was depicted in stone. A stone sculptured reredos was within the reach of most churches, and such reredoses were not uncommon where there was room below the east window, *e.g.*, Ludlow (53). In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the sculptured reredos obtained yet greater popularity from the introduction of a new material, beautiful in itself, especially the pure white alabaster found in the beds when first worked near Chellaston, Derbyshire. Great numbers of these alabaster reredoses were ordered from the Derby and Nottingham craftsmen in the fourteenth century,

[1] Serjeantson and Longden, *supra*, p. 238.
[2] Cox's *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 92.

Bury, Oise

J. F. H.

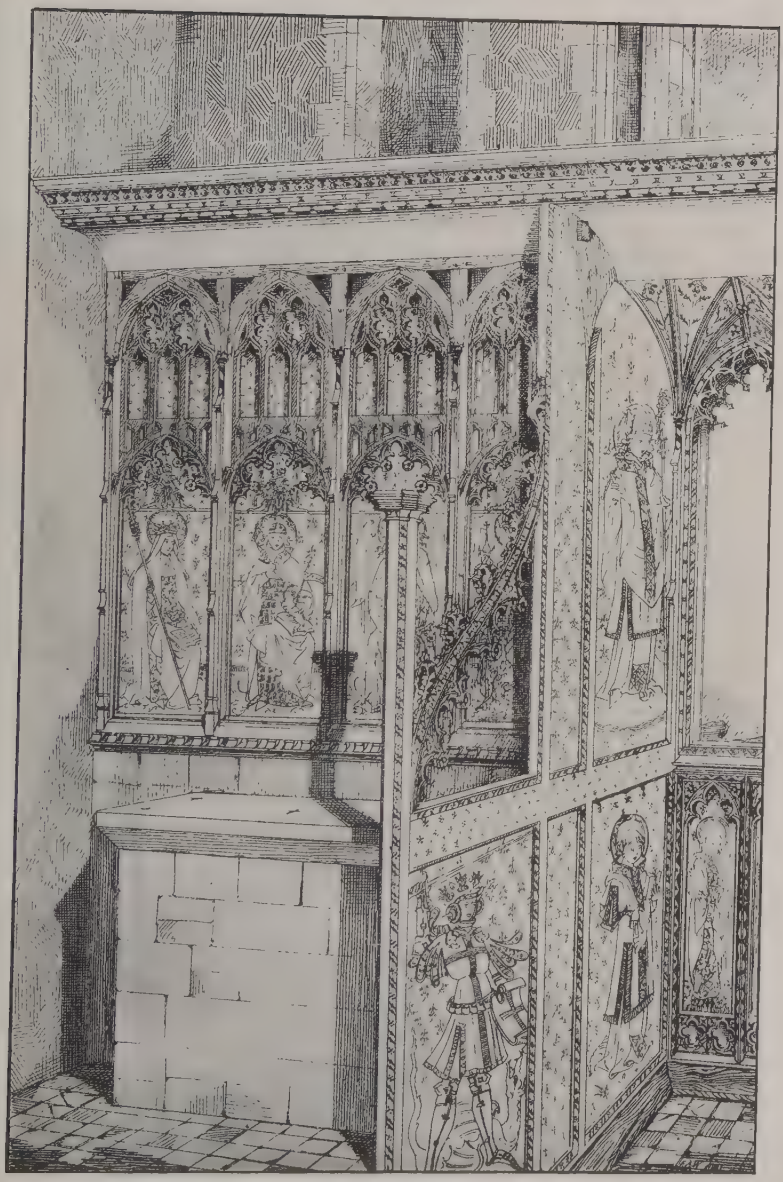
and increasingly in the two following centuries. It is probable that all were painted and gilt. Numerous fragments may be seen in museums. When, however, all images were ordered to be destroyed, these alabaster retables, or "tables" as they were usually called, were destroyed or were mutilated and plastered over. Here and there fragments of the sculpture seem to have been concealed beneath the flooring or within the walling of the church, whence in recent days some have been exhumed.[1] At

G. G. B.

Youlgreave, Derbyshire

Youlgreave, Derbyshire, is an alabaster table which is remarkable in being at once a sepulchral memorial and, in all probability,

[1] It is not to be supposed that all "tables" were reredoses. Small framed tablets of alabaster depicting the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Crucifixion, and the like were often in the possession of private persons. Very many alabaster "tables," in fragmental condition, are to be seen in churches and museums. A catalogue of the collection of alabaster sculptures exhibited in the rooms of the Society of Antiquaries was printed by the Society in 1913. There are numerous references to these sculptured "tables" in wills and inventories. Thus at Dunwich, Suffolk, money was bequeathed in 1458 "ad novam tabulam de alabastro de historia Sanctae Margaritae." Four marks were bequeathed to buy a "table" of alabaster, with figures of nine female saints, in St Peter's church, Norwich (*Archæologia*, xii. 94).



T. G.

Ranworth, Norfolk

the reredos of the former Lady chapel. In the centre the Blessed Virgin, crowned Queen of Heaven, holds the Child. On either side are the donors of the "table," with seven sons and ten daughters, kneeling in supplication. Around is a Latin inscription—"Here lies under this stone the bodies of Robert Gylbert, Gentleman, of Yolgref and Joan his wife; which Joan died on the 2nd of November, 1492." A good example of a small retable or "table" is preserved at Long Melford, Suffolk; it represents the Adoration of the Magi.

English alabaster was exported in great quantities both in block and in carved panels and triptychs, and far more numerous and elaborate examples are now to be seen abroad, *e.g.*, in France, Flanders, Italy, Spain, and even Iceland, than in England. They date from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards. In France, in addition to those in churches, some hundreds of examples remain in museums and private collections (63).[1]

Earlier still is the painted reredos; it is frequent in the Roman catacombs. Sometimes the painting was on wood and the reredos was movable, like that in the Jerusalem chamber at Westminster; sometimes it was on the panels of a screen, above a side altar, as at Ranworth, Norfolk (65). Very frequently it was painted on the wall or on a pillar above an altar. Of painted wooden reredoses the finest in England is that of the Westminster altar, now removed to the Jerusalem chamber. It is decorated with glass inlays and jewels, and is made to resemble a piece of enamelled gold work. In the centre stands Christ in Majesty holding the orb or universe in His hand; right and left are figures of Our Lady and St John.[2] It is work of the thirteenth century, and therefore a very early example. Another beautiful example, of the fourteenth century, is in Norwich cathedral; till recently it had been used as the top of a table. On it are representations of the Flagellation, Christ bearing the Cross, the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension. The date is fixed by the banners painted on the frame; they are those of Bishop Spencer and others who took part in the defeat of John Litester, "King of the Commons," and the peasant insurgents near North Walsham in 1381. It is $8\frac{1}{2}$ ft. long by 2 ft. $10\frac{1}{2}$ in. broad.[3] In the great church of Worstead,

[1] Typical French examples are illustrated by Comte Paul Biver in the *Archæological Journal* for March 1910, and by Prior and Gardner in *Mediæval Figure Sculpture in England*, c. xi.

[2] Lethaby's *Westminster*, p. 263, and Scott's *Gleanings from Westminster Abbey*, p. 105.

[3] See *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, xvi. 123 and 164.

Norfolk, there remains the frame of a lost reredos (68). At St George's, Tombland, Norwich, is a painted wooden "table" of great beauty; there are others in the churches of St Michael-

F. G. M. B.

Norwich Cathedral: Reredos

at-Plea and SS. Simon and Jude, and at Romsey. Painted reredoses may also be seen on the eastern walls of the side chapels of Gloucester Lady chapel; and at Tewkesbury, in the chantry chapels of Beauchamp, Fitz-Hamon, and Despencer. In the last of these the Trinity is represented in the centre,

with the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin below; on either side are represented the founders of the chantry, together with censing angels. At Gloucester, in the triforium, is a framed picture of the Last Judgment painted *in tempera* on a kind of gesso ground laid on a wooden planking nearly an inch thick; from its dimensions (9 ft. 10½ in. by 7 ft. 7¼ in.) it may have been a reredos: it was discovered in 1718 behind the wainscot of stallwork in the nave. From the classical architecture shown in it, it cannot be earlier than the later years of the reign of Henry VIII.; and it is anterior to 1538. It has been thought to be an epitome of a famous altar-

W. M.

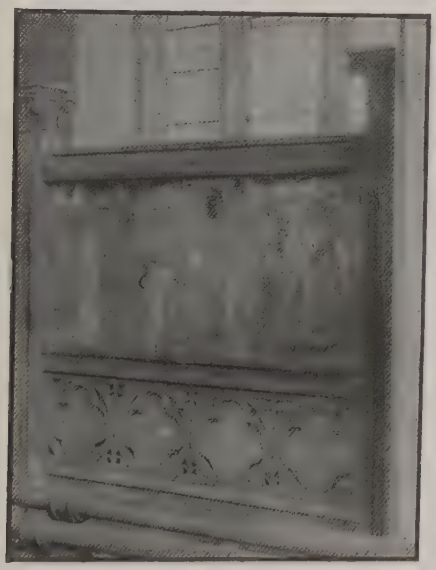
Worstead, Norfolk

piece at Dantzig, painted in 1467.[1] At Ranworth, Norfolk, the upper panels of the choir screen, instead of being open in normal Norfolk fashion, are filled in; and on them are painted exquisite figures of saints. This church possesses two nave altars, restored, one on each side of the door of the choir screen, and to these two side altars these paintings served as reredoses.[2]

[1] G. Scharf, jun., in *Archæologia*, xxxvi.

[2] Illustrations of the painted figures on the Ranworth screen of SS. Peter, Michael, Andrew, Paul, Stephen, Simon, Thomas, James, Philip, John the Divine, Etheldreda, Jude, Matthew, Felix, Lawrence, Margaret, and Barbara are given in the writer's volume on *Dedications and Patron Saints*, London, 1914.

Many of the picture reredoses were triptychs; *i.e.*, they had painted shutters which could be closed to save the paintings from damage by dust or sun. Many on a magnificent scale remain abroad, especially in Germany and the Netherlands, Switzerland, Brittany, Tyrol, and Denmark; fine foreign examples may be seen in the South Kensington Museum. Once they were common in England. At Durham there was a triptych "standing on the altar against the wall" at the back of the Jesus altar.[1] Long Melford, Suffolk, having abundant wall



P. M. J.

Adisham, Kent

space, had a very grand reredos. "At the back of the High Altar there was a goodly mount, made of one great tree, and set up to the foot of the window, there carved very artificially with the story of Christ's Passion, representing the horsemen with their swords, and the footmen, etc., as they used Christ on the Mount of Calvary, all being fair gilt, and lively and beautifully set forth. To cover and keep clean all the which, there were very fair and painted boards, made to shut to, which were

[1] In 1381 a painter of Newcastle was paid 12d. for painting one of St Cuthbert's birds (eider ducks) *pro exemplare pro le rerdos* (Rev. Dr Fowler's edition of *Rites of Durham*, p. 198).

opened upon high and solemn feast days, which then was a very beautiful show." At Adisham, Kent, is a wooden reredos which came from Canterbury cathedral (69). Below the band of quatrefoils is a deep plinth, diapered, and with remains of paintings (or "gesso") of the four Evangelists. The posts at either end have crocket caps of conventional foliage. The upper part originally had four trefoiled arches with slender shafts. These arches also had diapered backgrounds, on which were four saints in painting or in "gesso." On the cornice are the remains of three carved "pateræ." In each post is a long groove or mortice, to receive wings now gone; it was therefore a triptych. It is probably not later than the middle of the thirteenth century.[1] A magnificent example of the triptych type of reredos remains in the hospital chapel of St John at Sherborne (well worth visiting also for its stained glass);[2] in the centre is represented the Raising of Lazarus; outside the leaves or doors are four apostles, inside are minor Gospel scenes. Others occur at Burford in Shropshire, and at St Cross, Winchester. In 1467 William Boston left 40s. to Newark church, "et volo quod ista summa expendatur in honesta *clausura biforali* circa tabulam ad altare prædictum." A triptych was destroyed in 1562 in Haconby church, Lincolnshire, "one great altar-table *with leaves* full of images of alabaster."[3] Of extraordinary splendour are the triptychs in Dijon Museum, taken from the demolished conventual chapel of the dukes of Burgundy.

Of reredoses painted on walls and piers a very important series remains at St Albans. Here, against the western sides of each Norman pier of the north arcade of the nave, there was apparently a series of altars, and on each pier above a painted reredos. These paintings are of various dates, from late in the twelfth to the fourteenth century. The piers are painted both on their western and southern sides. Five of the western sides have representations of the Crucifixion; on the south sides are various subjects: St Christopher, St Thomas of Canterbury, and others. There were originally, no doubt, similar reredoses on the Norman piers of the south arcade, for there are known to have been altars in front of them;[4] these southern piers,

[1] See *Arch. Cantiana*, xiv. 158. I am indebted to Mr P. M. Johnston for a description of this ancient and interesting reredos.

[2] See paper by Mr Everard Green in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 26th February 1885.

[3] Micklethwaite's *Ornaments of the Rubric*, p. 25.

[4] The three altars now against the rood screen were moved from before the west faces of the three eastern piers of the south aisle of the nave (W. Page's *Guide to St Alban's Cathedral*, p. 7).

however, were all rebuilt in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Another reredos painted on the wall is that in the chapel of St Blaize or St Faith at Westminster, where the

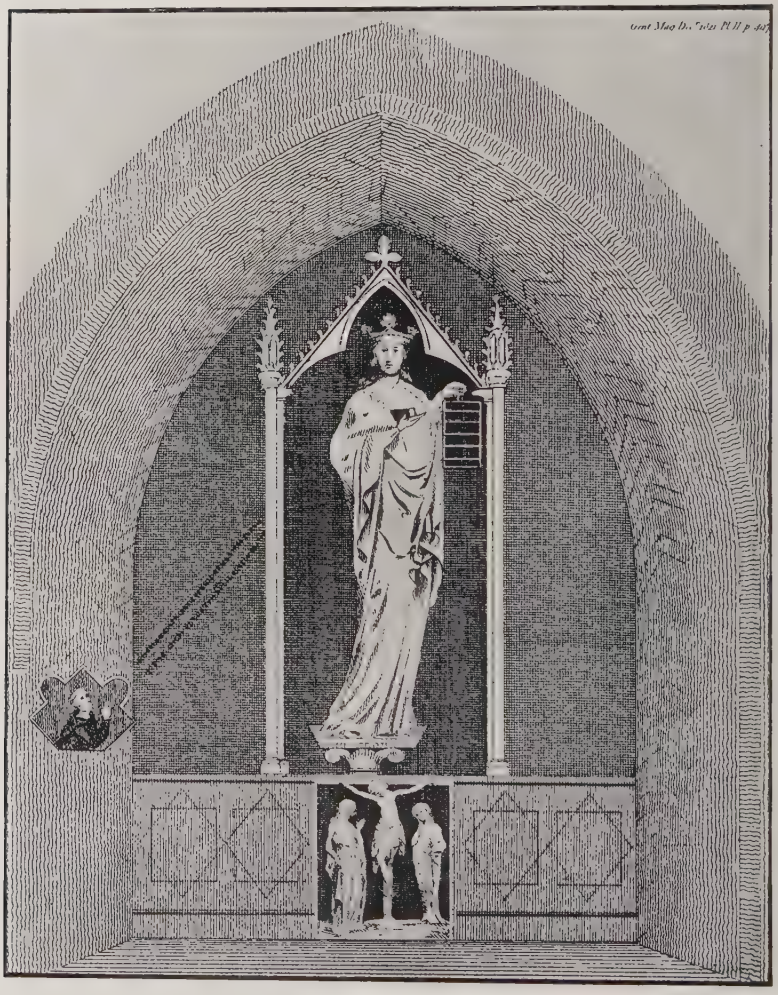
C. F. N.

St Alban's Nave

Crucifixion is painted below, and a large figure of St Faith above, "the most remarkable early Gothic wall-painting now remaining to us" (72).[1] At Wivelsfield, Sussex, is a recess in

[1] See Lethaby's *Westminster*, p. 260.

the east wall of the south chancel chapel with a pattern of diaper and lozenge work of thirteenth-century date. At Stow,



St Faith

Lincolnshire, in a recess over the altar in the east wall of the north transept, is depicted St Thomas of Canterbury, and on one side his supper with the ecclesiastics, on the other side

the murder. At Great Canfield, Essex, over the high altar, is a beautiful Virgin and Child. At St Cross, Winchester, are

W. M.

Hanwell, Oxon.

fragments of a richly painted reredos. At Bunbury, Cheshire, a reredos painted on the east wall of the south chapel represents the Resurrection. Others might be mentioned.

G. H. L.

Oldham's Chantry, Exeter Cathedral

In England, however, both the painted and the sculptured reredos were in the end supplanted by the architectural reredos.

It is not always possible to differentiate the two latter types ; the terms might be applied indifferently to a simple reredos like that in Hanwell, Oxon. (73), consisting of a row of niches with a small figure in each. When, however, a reredos contains a group of figures occupying the whole reredos or most of it, it plainly belongs to the former type, *e.g.*, in Bishop Oldham's chantry

F. B.

Chichester Cathedral

chapel, Exeter cathedral (73). Just as clearly, such screens as those of Chichester cathedral, Patrington, St Cuthbert, Wells, Winchester, and St Albans, in which the sculpture is subordinated to the architecture, belong to the latter type. In England, figure sculpture had shown brilliant promise in the school which, in the thirteenth century, covered with statuary the west front of the cathedral of Wells ; but that school died

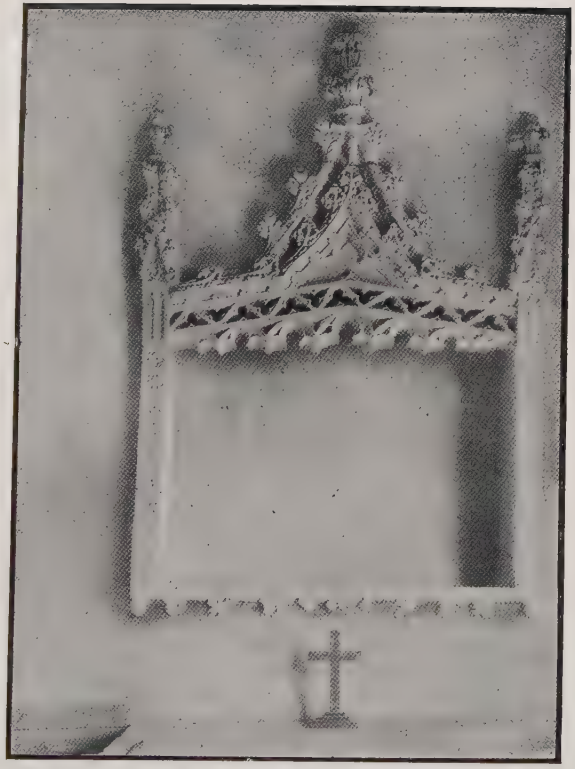
out in mysterious fashion and left no successor, and mediæval sculpture in England fell far in the rear of architecture—the achievements of the porch statuary of Rheims cathedral were not for us. Therefore, what we could not do well in sculpture, we went and did well in architecture. The result is seen in the

F. B.

Chichester Cathedral

preference for the architectural rather than the sculptured reredos.

Of the architectural reredoses, some were attached to the wall; some were detached. Examples of the former go back to the twelfth century. At Knockholt, Kent, the chancel has a reredos consisting of an arcade of three semicircular arches. At Bishopstone, Sussex, the same design occurs; the arches of the



F. B.

Theddlethorpe All Saints

F. B.

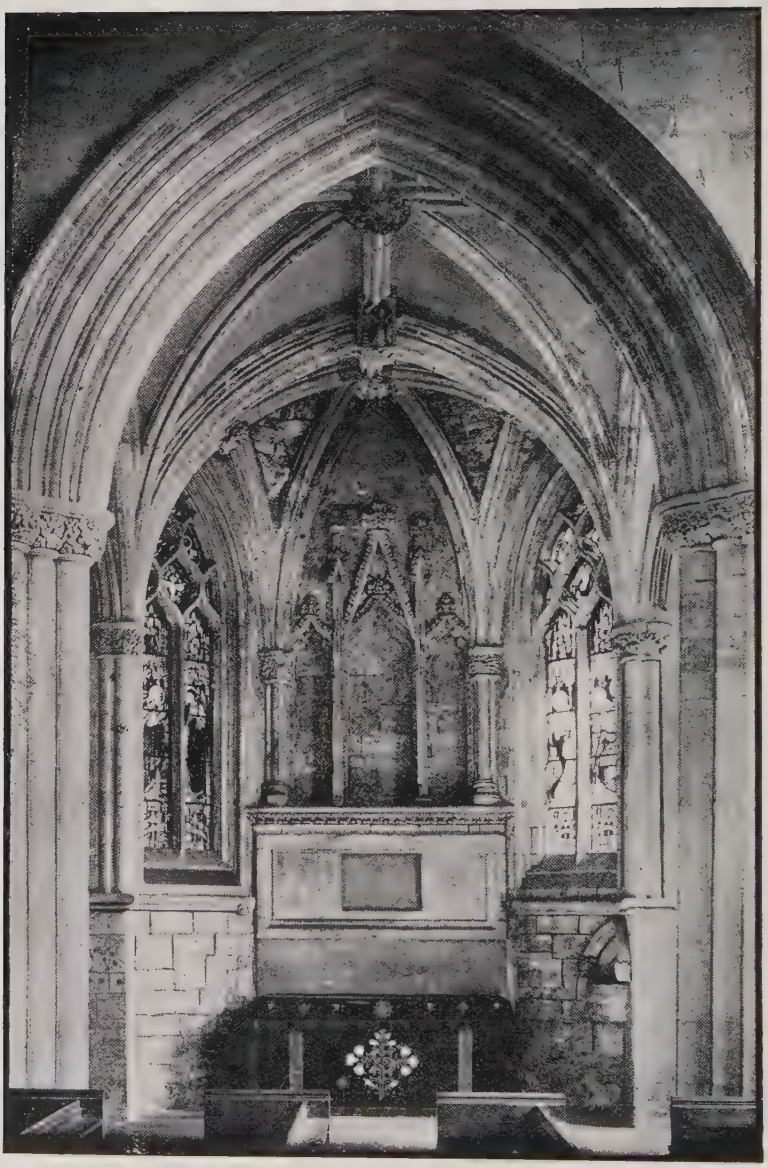
Theddlethorpe St Helen

reredos are semicircular; those of the sanctuary and choir are pointed; the work is therefore late in the twelfth century. Abroad also examples of reredoses become frequent in the twelfth century: *e.g.*, St Servais, Maestricht; Carrière-St-Denis, Seine-et-Oise; Wechselbourg, 1184; and Lisbjerg, Denmark. In the thirteenth century reredoses become more common.

F. B.

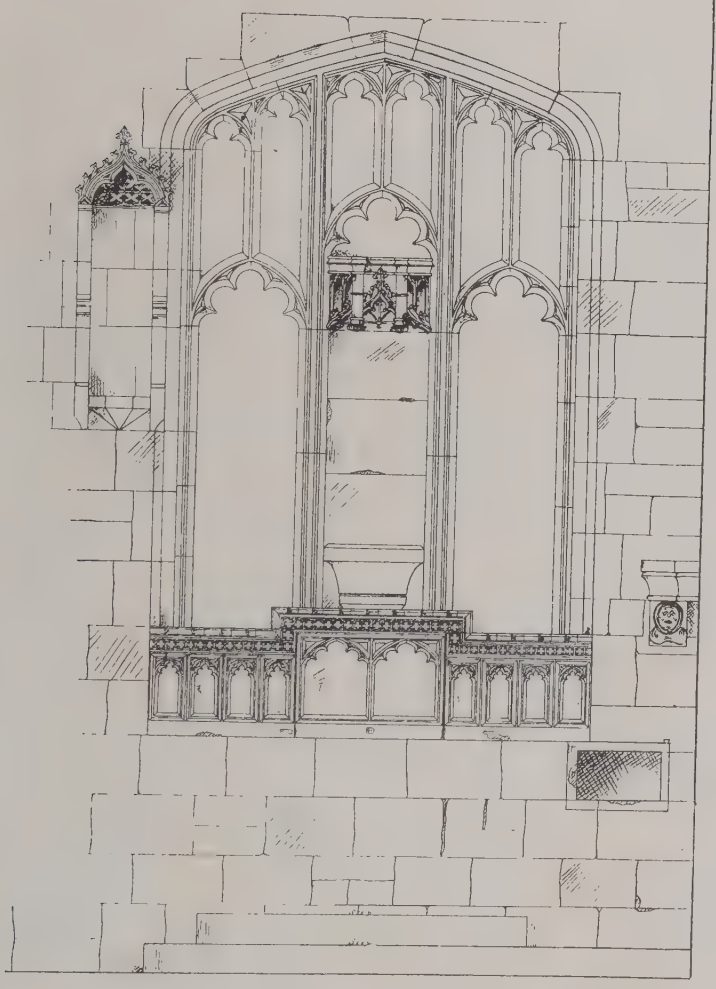
Aldingbourne, Sussex

Good foreign examples are at Angers cathedral, behind the high altar; Troyes cathedral, behind the altar of the Sacred Heart; one in Musée de Cluny from the Lady chapel of St Germer; one of silver in the church of the Saviour at Venice. Of this type there is a charming series in the nave chapels of Chichester cathedral, the best preserved of which is at the east end of the northern chapels (74). It consists simply of a recess



C. G.

Patrington: Lady Chapel



F. T. D.

Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire

containing two pointed arches with a trefoiled arch between, and above the three arches four quatrefoils; evidently it is work of the first half of the thirteenth century. The framework of three reredoses remains in the two Theddlethorpe churches in

the Lincolnshire marsh; the work seems to belong to early in the fourteenth century (76). Sometimes even the framework is gone and nothing but a recess is left, as at the east end of the aisles of the churches of Ford and Aldingbourne, Sussex (77). To the first half of the fourteenth century belongs another thoroughly architectural design in the pretty apsidal Lady chapel projected eastward from the south transept of Patrington, Yorkshire (78). To the same period belongs the reredos, still retaining much of its colour and gold, in the Lady chapel of Ely. The fifteenth-century reredos at Eaton Bray, Bedford, is treated like those of Ely Lady chapel, Sutton Benger, Wilts., and Smisby, Derbyshire; the central panel of the lower part of the

W. M.

Geddington, Northants

east window being left unglazed that it may serve as a niche for an image of Our Lady and Child or the patron saint (79). The fourteenth-century reredos at Geddington, Northants, consists of thirteen panels, of which the central one is considerably the widest: in length it is 12 ft. 1½ in., and must have had below an altar almost as long.[1] Other reredoses of similar character survive in a chapel of Great Malvern, and at Castor, Northants;

[1] It is worthy of note that at the foot of the internal walls of Geddington chancel there is a projecting stone ledge with the following inscription incised in very fine Lombardic characters: "Wilhelmus Glover de Geytyneton Capellanus fecit scabella ejus are et pavimentare istum cancellum ad honorem Dei et Beate Marie, qui obiit in festo Corporis XRISTI anno Domini MCCCLXIX; cujus anime prospicietur Deus. Amen."

BAMPTON, OXFORDSHIRE c. 1320

ST. THOMAS'S, SALISBURY c. 1470.

J. H. P.

Hanwell, Bampton, and Somerton, Oxon., and St Thomas, Sarum. Oxfordshire is rich in reredoses of the fourteenth century. It is noteworthy that they nearly all occur over side altars: usually they have a figure of Christ in the central panel, with saints under canopies on either side. The reredos of a high altar, on the other hand, often had a Crucifixion in the central panel; and this may be the reason why central reredoses have perished, while several of those of the side altars have survived. At

G. G. B.

Castor, Northants

Bampton the reredos represents the institution of the Eucharist; perhaps the altar was that of the Blessed Sacrament. An example of the same period, on a large scale but mutilated, remains in the hall of the King's School, Worcester, once the refectory of the Benedictine monks by whom the cathedral was served. At Great Billing and at Barnwell, Northants, is a fourteenth-century reredos, consisting of three crocketed ogee niches (83). Of similar design, but on a nobler scale, are the

magnificent niches of the reredos (much restored) in the Lady chapel in Bristol cathedral.[1]

In the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth, parochial reredoses became much more grandiose and imposing. At St Cuthbert's, Wells, are the remains of two great reredoses; that in the Lady chapel contained a tree of Jesse and genealogy of Our Lord (84). In the agreement for this reredos, made in 1470, John Stowell, freemason, undertook to execute "the workmanship and masonry craft of a Jesse front for forty pounds," say

J. F. E.

Barnwell, Northants

£600 of our money. A fine reredos from Wellington, Somerset, is preserved in the Taunton Museum. The Lady chapels, both of Gloucester cathedral and Christchurch priory (7), retain considerable fragments of important reredoses. To this period belongs the reredos of the chantry of Henry V. at Westminster, which is the more interesting because it retains the original statues, "extremely fine and powerful in design." At Chipping Norton, Oxon., is a reredos behind the pulpit, below which must

[1] See Britton's restoration in his *Cathedral Antiquities* for view of it in 1830.

originally have stood one of the lateral altars of the choir screen.[1] At Cricklade, Wilts., there are reredoses on either side of the arch of the central tower, pointing to the presence formerly of similar lateral altars.[2]

In the greater monastic churches a lofty rood screen stretched across one of the easternmost bays of the nave. In front of this was the nave altar (p. 47). As this stood centrally, there

W. M.

St Cuthbert, Wells

could be no central door; there had to be side doors. Such rood screens remain at St Albans and Llandaff. As the nave altar backed on to them, they served also as reredoses. That of St Albans belongs to the second quarter of the fourteenth century (71). That at Llandaff is not *in situ*, and only its lower story remains; it was formerly in the presbytery behind the

[1] Illustrated in the writer's *Gothic Architecture in England*, p. 548.

[2] Other good examples remain at Ludlow; Meopham, Kent; Sawley Derbyshire; Fairford, Gloucester; Reigate (oak), and elsewhere.

high altar. It is said by Browne Willis to have been erected between 1478 and 1496.[1]

Of reredoses behind the high altars of the greater churches, four examples of the fourteenth century remain; in the churche of the secular canons at Beverley and Ottery St Mary, the Benedictine church of Selby, and the church of the Austin canons of Christchurch, Hants. The western side of the

W. M.

St Cuthbert, Wells

Beverley reredos is much restored; but the realistic renderings of plant and leaf show that it belongs rather to the first than to the second quarter of the fourteenth century (86). The foliage of the capitals, corbels, and bosses of the eastern side is more advanced in type, and belongs to the second quarter of

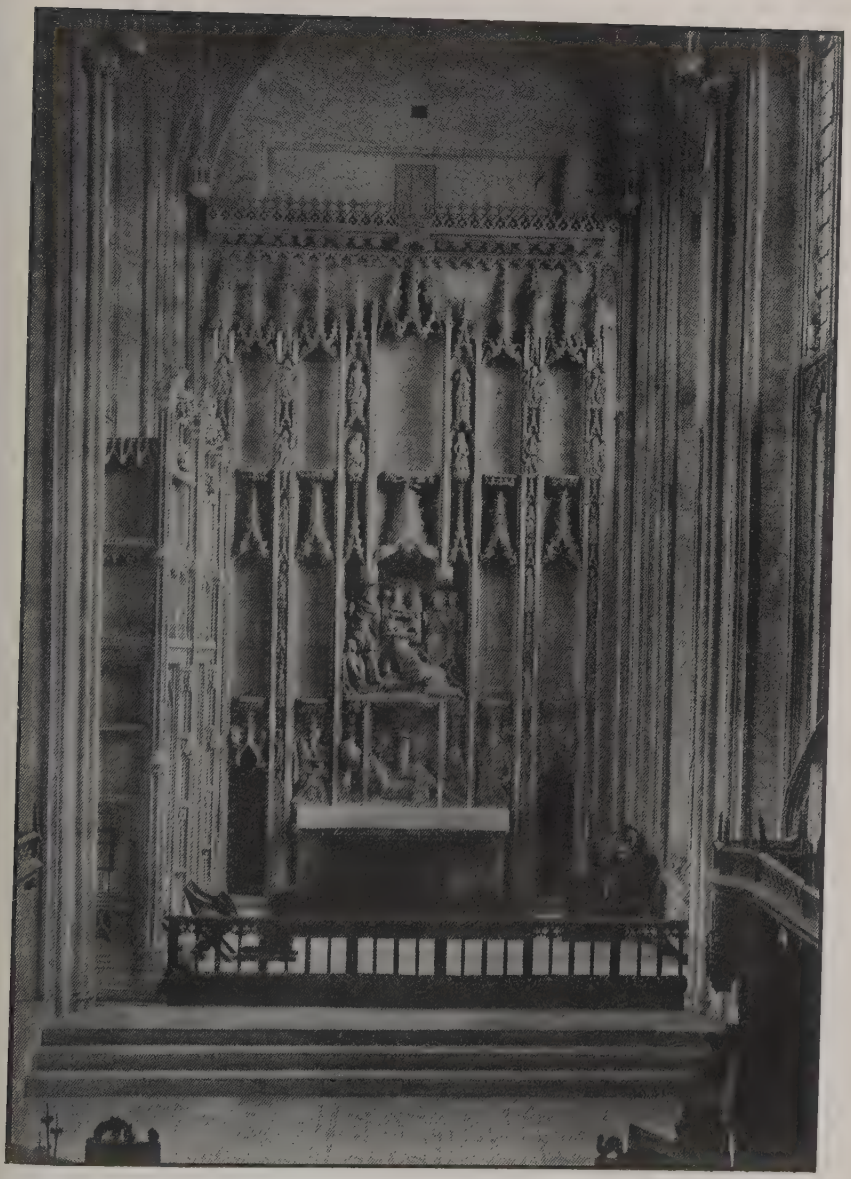
[1] See description in his *Cathedrals*, and drawing in *Spring Gardens Sketch Book*, viii. 15.

the century; it is unsurpassed in England in richness and delicacy. It would seem that, not long after the erection of the

J. F. H.

Beverley Minster

eastern side, the reredos was widened so as to carry a broad platform on which might be placed an organ for services at the



H. E. M.

Christchurch, Hampshire

shrine of St John of Beverley, which probably stood between the screen and the east window of the cathedral, or which was used for the arrangement of lights on the beams, or was occupied by certain of the assistants at Christmas Day.[1] Selby has a platform broad enough for some such use. Having these platforms, both these reredoses had to be kept low. But at Ottery and Christchurch no such platforms were designed, and

F. S.

Ottery St Mary, Devon

both reredoses rose to a great height, blocking the eastern vista of each church. Both are works of the second half of the century. That of Ottery St Mary was no doubt the work of the great John Grandisson, who was Bishop of Exeter from 1327 to 1369; who made Ottery church collegiate, and reconstructed the whole of it on a magnificent scale. This reredos to a large

[1] See Frere's *Use of Sarum*, p. 121.

H. E. M.

Christchurch, Hampshire

extent is a restoration by Mr Butterfield. That at Christchurch was filled originally with a Jesse tree in stone; the majority of the statues, however, have disappeared (87). There remains, however, in the lowest compartment, a sleeping figure of Jesse, out of whom rises the tree; on the left David plays the harp, on the right, sublimely musing, sits Solomon. Above is a panel in which the Nativity and the visit of the Magi are blended into one scene. On the left sits Our Lady with the Child in her lap, not represented as a babe in swaddling clothes, but standing up in a long garment. Behind her stands Joseph. Before her one of the three kings prostrates himself, offering his gift of gold in the form of a gold tankard. Behind him stand the other two; one carries a pot of myrrh, the other a "ship" of frankincense. On a bracket above the three kings are shepherds kneeling in adoration, their sheep grazing on the hill-top above (89). As this choir was rebuilt not much before 1395 or 1406, either the reredos must have been taken down and re-erected; or, as is perhaps more probable, was completed before 1350, but not set up, either because the works were stopped by the Black Death of 1349-50, or because it was already in contemplation to rebuild the choir. These two towering structures revolutionised the development of the English reredos. Yet the new type had decided demerits. It blocked up for ever the lengthy eastern vistas, which gave a charm specially English to our greater churches; at Winchester, not less than 130 ft. of the interior are blotted from view for ever. That, however, was no great matter. Our cathedrals were not built by æsthetes for æsthetes. What was much more serious was that the shrine of the great saint—St Swithin at Winchester, St Alban at St Albans—was for ever hidden from view. Yet neither did this deter the church from erecting great barrier walls which should enormously enhance the dignity of the high altar, and add the teaching of sculptured imagery on the reredos to that of stained glass in the storied windows. In two important churches, however, the new precedent was not followed.[1] The reredos of Westminster, a work of the fifteenth century, is but one story high (30). But here there was a special reason controlling the design; viz., that, as the Islip drawing shows, it had to support an upper altar. (This altar had a reredos of its own, which in the drawing appears to be a triptych.) The other exception is at Malvern, where the arrangements are most peculiar. For the choir terminates in low walls shaped like a bow and string. Between

[1] Its western side is modern; but the mutilated eastern side is original. It is described and illustrated in the writer's *Westminster Abbey*, 237.

F. S.

Southwark Cathedral

the "string" and the "bow" is a space which may have been a Feretory, as at Winchester. It is entered by two side doors in the "string." The wall between these two doors is the reredos, and is covered with beautiful tiling: some of the tiles bear the dates 1453 and 1456. But St Albans abbey, Winchester cathedral, Milton abbey, Dorset, and the collegiate church of St Mary Overie, now Southwark cathedral, all built towering reredoses of the type of those of Ottery St Mary and Christchurch. That of St Albans was the work of Abbot Wallingford, who died in 1484 (Frontispiece and p. 47).

The reredos at Winchester is no doubt from the same shop; the two in design are almost exactly alike, and consist of a wall about 40 ft. high, pierced with a door on either side. In the centre, over the altar, is a blank panel for a movable table; and over this is a reredos of thirteen small niches, probably for figures of Our Lord and His apostles. Above is a great crucifix, with a Mary and John on either hand. The statuary on both reredoses is modern. In Winchester cathedral, in addition to the great stone reredos, there was behind the altar itself "a table of images of silver and gold garnished with precious stones." That of Milton abbey is in part restored in plaster. There used to be an inscription on it to the effect that Abbot William Middleton and Thomas Wilken, vicar of the parish, "hoc altare depinxerunt" in the year of Our Lord 1492 (179). St Mary Overie, Southwark, was connected with Winchester, and the screen was presented in 1520 by Bishop Fox of Winchester, whose emblem, a pelican in her piety, occurs repeatedly on it. It contains thirty-three niches, in allusion to the number of the years of the life of Our Lord; and its main subject was a representation of the Incarnation. It underwent considerable restoration in 1833 (91). To these may be added the reredoses which occupy the whole of the eastern walls of All Souls and New College, Oxford. The latter is a restoration based on fragments of the reredos of 1386, discovered in the eastern wall in 1789; the statues were added in 1888-91. The chapel of All Souls was consecrated in 1442. When all images had to be destroyed *temp.* Edward VI., this reredos was mutilated. After the Restoration the niche work was cut back still further, and plastered over to form a ground for a fresco. In 1717 this was cased up in a classical reredos of painted and gilded marble. Recently all this has been stripped off, as well as the fresco and plaster work behind, and with the remaining fragments of the original work, the present gorgeous reredos has been designed by Sir Gilbert Scott. On such reredoses vast sums were expended by the mediæval churchmen.

L. A. P. S.

Chichester Cathedral

In the reign of Edward III. a magnificent reredos of alabaster was made for the high altar of St George's, Windsor. Ten carts, each drawn by eight horses under the care of two men, were required for its conveyance from the alabaster shops at Nottingham to Windsor, and the journey occupied seventeen days. It cost £200 (£3,000), and £26. 6s. 8d. (£395) for carriage.[1] To these should be added the great oak reredos of Bishop Sherburne (1508-1536) recently re-erected in Chichester cathedral at the back of the modern reredos (93).

It was these two types of reredos or "retablo" which received such astonishing development in Spain in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Sometimes, as at All Souls, Oxford, the retablo occupies the whole of the eastern wall; *e.g.*, St Nicholas, Burgos; others, *e.g.*, at Saragossa and Toledo, are detached, as at Winchester and St Albans; that of Toledo follows the curve of the apse and rises to a height of more than 50 ft. These retablos are a mass of delicate and intricate carving in endless detail. In the centre is sometimes a circular panel, from which radiate rays of glory, showing forth the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for the veneration of the people; it is, in fact, a fixed and permanent monstrance or *ostentorium* in stone (95).

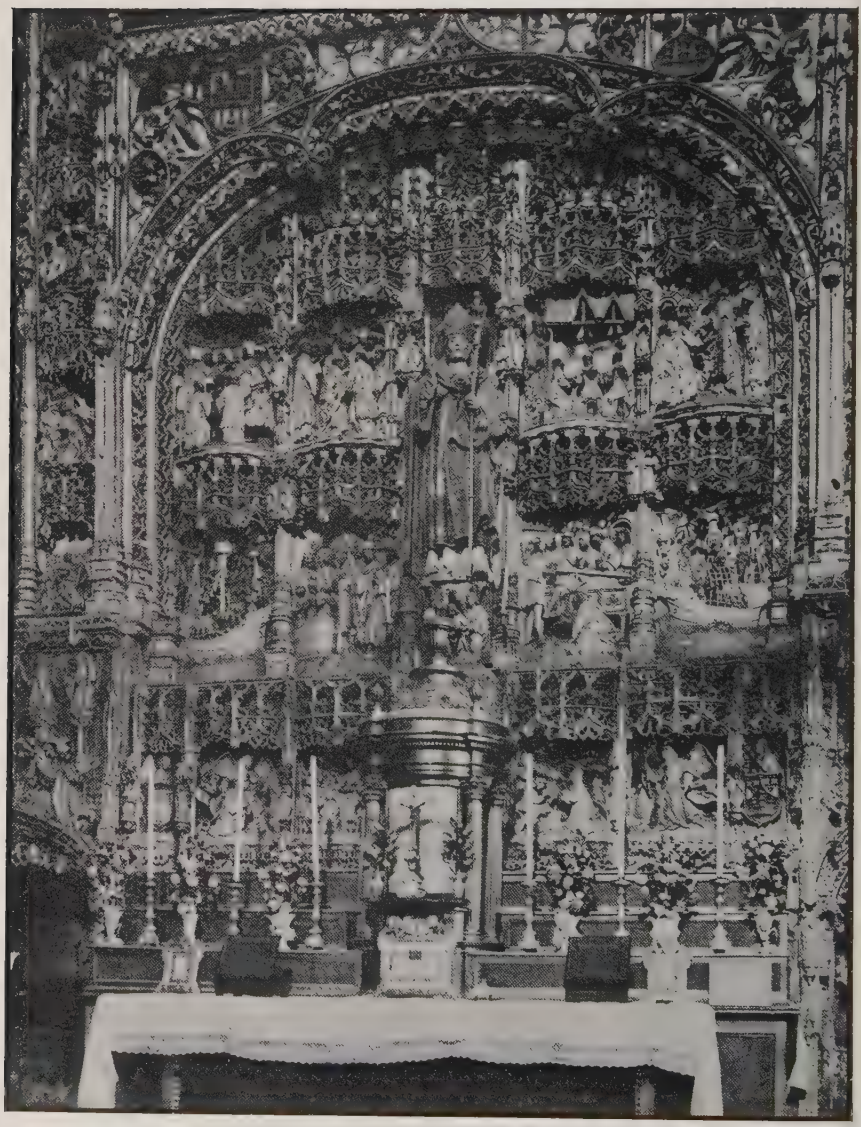
Such reredoses as those at Christchurch, St Albans, and the two Oxford colleges are of the Wall type. At Peterborough, York, and Durham, different precedents were followed. In the design of the York screen there was a plentiful lack of inspiration; it is just a section of aisle wall pivoted round to serve as reredos. The lower part corresponds to the internal panelling of an aisle wall, the upper compartment to aisle windows; while it is crested like an aisle wall by a battlemented parapet. The remaining two are of south country design. That of Peterborough has perished, but an engraving in Gunton's *Peterborough Cathedral* shows it before it was pulled down in 1643; previously to that, however, all the images had been destroyed. "Behind the Communion table," he says, "there stood a curious piece of stone work, admired much by strangers and travellers; a stately screen it was, well wrought, painted and gilt, which rose up as high almost as the roof of the church in a row of three lofty spires, with other lesser spires growing out of each of them, as it is represented in the annexed draft. This now had no imagery work upon it, and yet, because it bore the name of the high altar, was pulled all down with ropes, laid low and level with the ground" (97).[2] To the fifteenth century probably belongs the

[1] *Archæological Journal*, lxi. 225.

[2] Gunton's *Peterborough*, p. 334.

F. B.

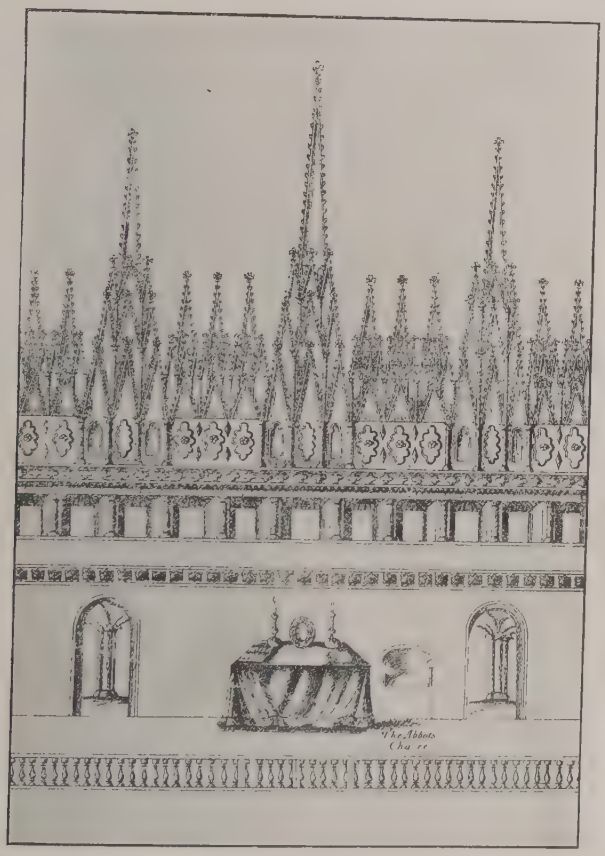
Burgos St Nicholas



F. B.

Burgos St Nicholas

tabernaculum or reredos of ivory, mentioned in the inventory. It stood on four legs and was a triptych. In the centre was the image of Our Lady, and inside the shutters were painted the Nativity and the Annunciation. In 1332 the abbot of



S. G.

Peterborough Cathedral

Chertsey "construxit tabernaculum super magnum altare apud Egeham." The Durham reredos is of much interest, for we have the accounts for its erection, and a description of it in the *Rites of Durham*[1] (99). The "Scriptores Tres" of the history of Durham record that in 1380, John, Lord Neville of Raby, presented "the

[1] See Dr Fowler's edition, p. 198.

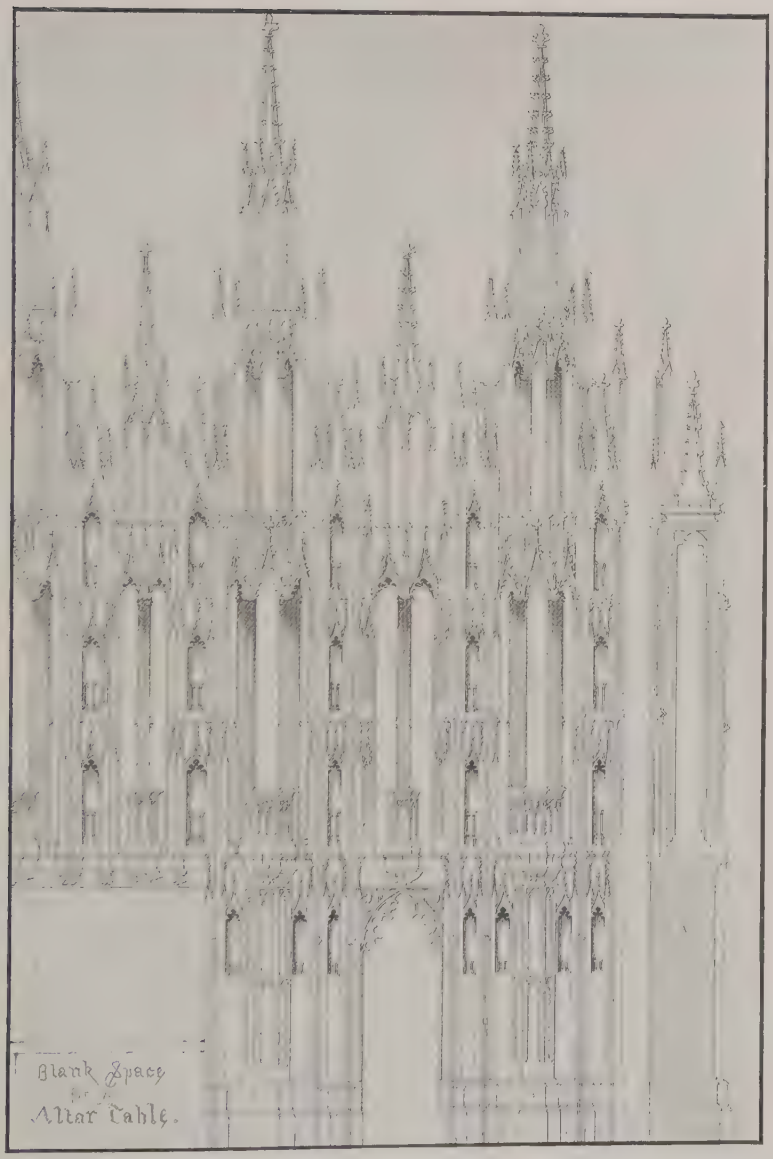
work above the altar which is called 'La Reredos,' and that it was brought from London in boxes by sea to Newcastle." It cost him £533. 6s. 8d., and the Prior and others gave another £200; so that the total cost was over £700 (about £12,000). Among its fair images of alabaster, all finely painted and gilded, "right over the high altar, was artificially placed, in very fine alabaster, the picture of Our Lady standing in the midst, and the picture of St Cuthbert on the one side and the picture of St Oswald on the other, being all richly gilded." Like the reredoses at St Albans and Winchester, it is of clunch, a bed of hardened chalk. As the chalk formation does not extend so far north, it is plain, apart from the documentary evidence quoted above, that it is South of England work. But the design also—of tall, lean, spiky spirelets—is South of England also. It appears first in the stone sedilia (197) and the oak throne which were placed in Exeter choir (*c.* 1316) by Bishop Stapledon. It is a design eminently suited for expression in woodwork; it is just as inept in stone. It became enormously popular in both. In woodwork it is supremely successful in the tabernacles of the stalls of Ripon, Beverley, Nantwich, Manchester, Durham, Lincoln, York, Chester, Carlisle, and elsewhere.[1] In stonework it was adopted in various forms. A notable example is the canopy in Gloucester cathedral over the tomb of Edward II. (1335)[2]; in the canopies at Tewkesbury over the tombs of Sir Hugh Despenser (*ob.* 1349) and Sir Guy de Brien (*ob.* 1391); and the sedilia at Selby, which apparently came from the same shop as the Neville screen at Durham. All these have lost their statuary, and to this loss much of their meagre and unsatisfactory effect is due: the Neville screen once contained in its niches no less than 107 alabaster statuettes.

It should be added that these detached reredoses, with apparently the exception of that of Ottery St Mary, have two side doors; *e.g.*, Durham, Gloucester, Llandaff, Winchester, Westminster, Peterborough; this may have been to allow the deacon to pass completely round the altar in order to cense it at High Mass, in accordance with the rubric; *e.g.*, the Sarum Missal[3] has at the offertory the direction to the deacon, "Deinde thurificando altare circumeat" (97). But it is more likely that they were intended to give access to the small

[1] All these are fully illustrated in the writer's *Stalls and Tabernacle Work.*

[2] Illustrated in *Gothic Architecture in England*, p. 294.

[3] Ed. Burntisland, col. 31** (note), and *Sarum Manual*, Surtees ed., 6.* Also Frere's *Use of Sarum*, i. 44.

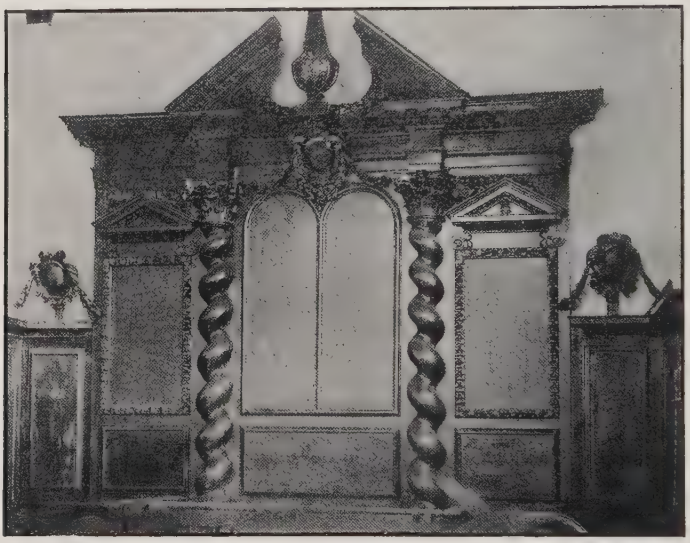


R. B.

Durham Cathedral: Reredos

chamber which was frequently placed behind the high altar, and which was probably the *locus preparationis* of the elements at High Mass (p. 168).

In the eighteenth century, numerous wooden reredoses of classical design were put up; *e.g.*, that in the Orchey chapel,



A. W. A.

Watford (1612)

Watford, great numbers of which, all of historical interest, as permanent evidence of the continuity of the life of the Church of England, and many of good design, have been destroyed at recent "restorations."[1]

[1] On Post-Reformation reredoses see *English Church Life from the Restoration to the Tractarian Movement*, by J. W. Legg, 1914, pp. 127-136.

CHAPTER III

THE LENTEN VEIL

In mediæval churches a curtain was drawn across the chancel during Lent, except during the reading of the Gospel at Mass. This use goes back to very early days.[1] For Moses in the desert "brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony: as the Lord commanded Moses."[2]

In the early Christian Church the altar was screened from view for a short time, not in Lent only, but at every Mass, viz., during the reading of the prayer of consecration. And this use crystallised, and was perpetuated in the Greek Church, where in every church there stands now in front of the high altar not a curtain, but a solid stone screen of masonry, the Iconostasis, so that the act of consecration is never seen of the people. In the West this was not the feeling; the sacrifice was "et plebis et præsulis"; therefore the *cancelli* of the early altar enclosure were low, and for the most part the act of consecration has remained in view ever since.[3] Even when every parish church put up a rood screen, the upper part of it was composed of open tracery,[4] or, as in Norfolk and Suffolk, of cusped openings without tracery, affording a still more unobstructed view.[5]

[1] Though there are no veils to the baldachinos at St Peter's and at S. Maria Maggiore, Rome, yet the artist has perpetuated the tradition by providing them with vallances in bronze.

[2] Exod. xl. 21.

[3] E. Bishop in *Downside Review*, July 1905. The mediæval Western altar had side curtains only, but this does not exclude the probability that originally there were also front curtains.

[4] Ranworth is an exception.

[5] In a cathedral, collegiate, or monastic church, the conditions, of course, were different; the laity were not intended to be present at services at the high altar; they had an altar of their own in the nave, the Rood or Jesus altar; therefore the choir screens at York, Canterbury, Ripon, Lincoln Southwell, etc., are not of open woodwork, but of solid masonry.

The earliest example of a veiled baldachino is a representation in the Vienna "Genesis," in which is shown an altar beneath a baldachino with a veil in front only, *i.e.*, towards the people.[1]

Of these uses the Lenten veil may be regarded as a survival and variant; it is quite possible, however, that it may have an independent origin. That the Lenten veil was in universal use in the English churches is clear in many ways. As early as 878 King Alfred ordained a fine of 120s. as the penalty for tearing down a Lenten veil. In some cases there still remains the hook, or spike, or winch, by which the veil was drawn across; *e.g.*, in the cathedrals of Salisbury and Ripon; and at Wenlock, Salop, Shillington, Beds., and elsewhere. At Milton abbey, Dorset, in the fifth bay, facing the presbytery, are several rings and hooks which appertained to the Lenten veil. Similar holes may be seen at Lustleigh, Devon, and elsewhere; or at times corbels on which rested a beam from which the Lenten veil was suspended. At Furness abbey, just to the west of the sedilia, on a level with their canopies, are three pin holes for the pulley of the Lenten veil, which here hung across the presbytery (173). At Kirkstall, just inside the presbytery, on both sides of it, are holes for fixing the Lenten veil.[2] In Arundel chancel the pulleys remain by which it was tightened; in Durham cathedral and at Skirlaugh, Yorkshire, and Alfriston, Sussex, the hooks remain.

Many references to the arrangements for hanging and withdrawing the Lenten veil occur in parish accounts. In 1436 there was paid at Tintinhull, Somerset, "1d. for one cord for suspending the Lent cloth"; at Yatton, Somerset, in 1454, "2d. for a line to the Lent cloth"; and in 1509, "for 14 yards of line to make the Lent cloth, 4s. 8d."; at Ashburton, Devon, "for 20 yards of string for hanging the Lent cloth, 4d., and for 33 rings for the said Lent cloth, 3d." These rings sometimes ran along a rope, sometimes along a wire, sometimes along an iron rod, fixed to the wall with staples. At St Mary, Cambridge, in 1556, there was bought "a veil for Lent with a rope and 2 staples." At St Mary-at-Hill, London, in 1527, there was paid "for a great iron to hang the veil of the chancel against Lent, 12d."; and "for mending of the said vail and for certain rings, 12d."[3] Where the width of the choir was considerable, a beam

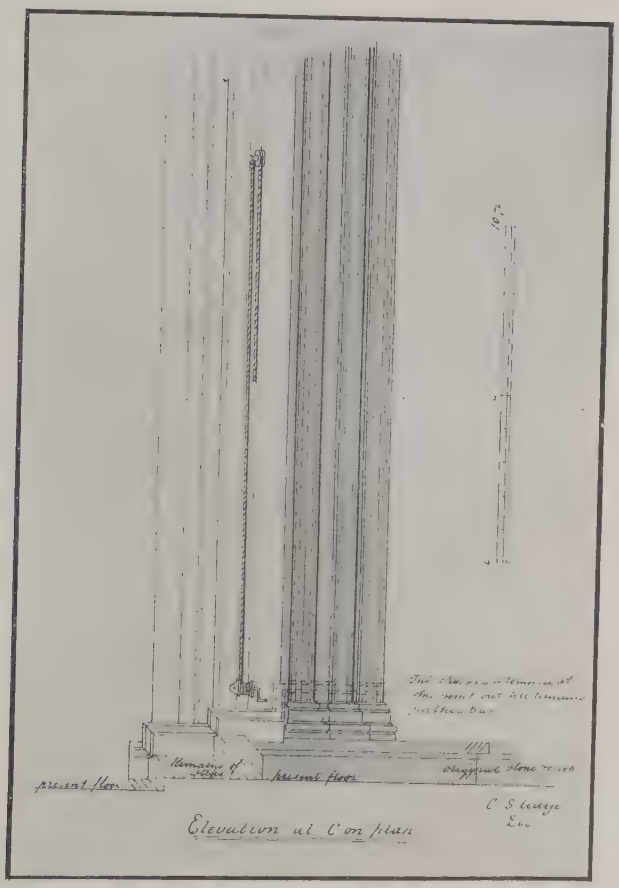
[1] Mr Bishop quotes also a doubtful reference from *Liber Pontif.*, ed. Duchesne, i. 363, lines 7-10, which seems to refer to veils hanging round the altar from the baldaquin; this would be A.D. 684.

[2] Hope's *Furness Abbey*, p. 23; and *Kirkstall Abbey*, p. 12.

[3] Dr Cox's *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 250.

was employed, as in Salisbury cathedral, till the beam was destroyed by Wyatt; to the beam curtain hooks could be fixed.

The Lenten veil or curtain, from the evening before the



Salisbury Cathedral

first Sunday in Lent till the Wednesday before Easter, hung down between the people and the holy of holies. In cathedrals it parted the presbytery from the choir; *e.g.*, at Salisbury; in parish churches it hung between the choir and the sanctuary. Thus in Holy Trinity church, Coventry, the churchwardens were

"to cover the altar and the rood in Lent with Lenten cloths and to hang the *veil* in the choir."[1]

It has been said that the Lenten veil hung before the whole of the choir screen, but this was not a Lenten veil at all, but a *rood cloth*, and it would rather seem that it hung before the rood alone and its accessories, the Mary and John, and at times two seraphim (see Islip Roll, 173); or else that each figure was shrouded up separately. Thus among the entries are "9 yards of buckram for the Rood cloth," "a cloth to hang before the Rood at Lent," "a line to pull up the cloth before the Rood," "making a pulley to draw up the veil before the Rood." It was only at the reading of the Gospel during Mass that the veil was pulled aside, and so remained till the "Orate fratres," except at an Episcopal benediction, on feasts of nine lessons, and on Saturdays,[2] when it was withdrawn for the whole day. Moreover, all the crucifixes, including the large one in or above the rood lofts, all the images in the church, the reredoses, altar frontals, the reliquaries, and even the suspended pyx, were covered up, except on Palm Sunday, when the great Rood and the cross over the high altar were uncovered. Many of the figures of saints were in niches provided with wooden shutters for the purpose. At Daventry, "in a pillar of the churche, was a lytle ymage of Seint Anne, made of alleblaster, standyng fixed to the piller, closed and clasped together with four bordes, small, payntyd, and growynge rownd abowt the image, in manar of a compas, lyke as it is to see comonly and all abowt, where as suche ymages be wont to be made for, to be solde and set up in churches, chapells, crosses, and oratories in many placis. And this ymage was thus shett closed and clasped, accordynge to the rulles that in all the churchis of England be observyd, all ymages to be hid from Ashe Wednesday to Easter-day in the mornynge." Images not placed in niches with doors were shrouded in cloths of white linen or silk, all marked with red crosses. Salisbury, in 1220, had a Lenten veil of silk: "velum unum de serico quadragesimale." Durham, in 1446, had two white cloths for Lent with red crosses sewn on; "duo panni albi pro Quadragecima, cum crucibus rubeis superconsutis." St Frideswide's, Oxford, at the suppression had "a veall of new whitt sercenet for Lentt, XXs. Item, hangings for the highe alter, for above and benethe, of new whit sercenett with redd crosses . . . for Lent, Xs."

Frequent mention occurs in accounts and inventories of the

[1] Gasquet's *Mediæval Parish Life*, p. 117.

[2] See Frere's *Use of Sarum*, p. 139.

various sheets or cloths by which statues, reredoses, etc., were covered up in Lent: these also were marked with red crosses. Thus at Horton, Northants, J. Launden in 1509 says in his will, "I bequeath a ewe lamb and 12d. towards a cloth to cover the twelve apostles"; and in 1522, R. Fennymore bequeaths "To Our Lady of Wittilbury ii ells of broad cloth to be drawn upon wire before her." The inventory of Bassingbourn church, Cambs., in 1498, includes 3 Lent cloths, 8 sheets of linen, 4 old cloths lying in the roodloft, and other linen cloths for covering the tabernacles of the Trinity and Our Lady in the chapel;[1] and in 1507, "for mending of cloths to cover the saints in Lent, 2d."; and in the same year, "for a bar or rod of iron with 2 staples and ten rings to hang upon a cloth before the images of Saint Mary and Saint Katherine, 4d." It cost St Lawrence, Reading, 3d. in 1521 "for canvas for covering of St Michael": and at Stoke Coursy, Somerset, in 1529, there was paid "to the two clerks for covering the images in Lent, 2d."

A considerable time elapsed before the Lenten veil finally disappeared from the English churches. In 1547 the churchwardens of Smarden church, Kent, sold 19 ells of white cloth which had formed the Lenten veil there. At Sandal Magna, York, in 1549, there were "ij hanggyngs for the alter for lent of lynnen clothe with redde crossys. Item, a lenten clothe hanggyng in the quere." In 1557 there was paid at St Michael's, Cornhill, xxs. iiijd., "for a vaill before the high altar this lente." At Colchester, in 1560, there was a Lent cloth for the high altar (to cover the reredos), as well as a Lenten veil. At St Peter Cheap, London, in 1555, there was paid "for ix ells of canvas at vid. the ell for to hang before the Rood, iiiis. vid."

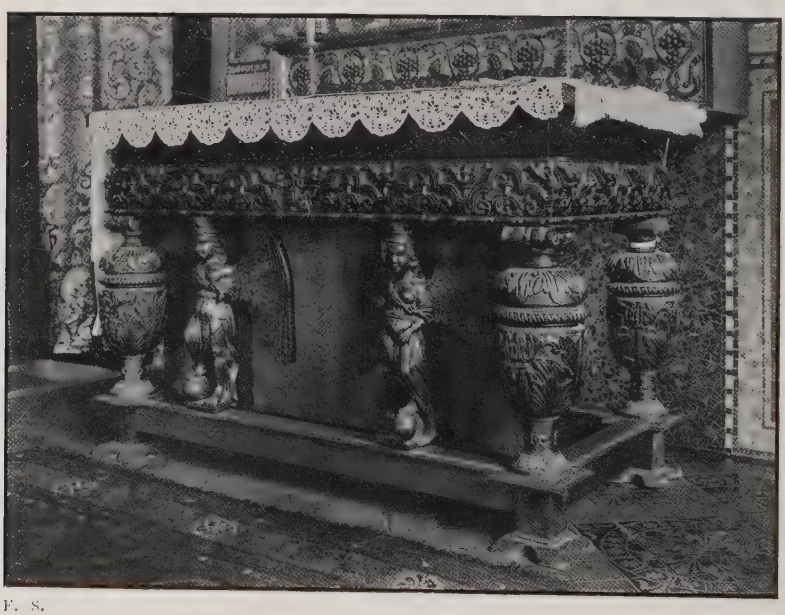
Lyndwood, page 252, edition 1679, states that the Lenten or chancel veil had to be provided by the parishioners.

[1] Dr Cox's *Churchwardens' Accounts*, pp. 131, 250; Serjeantson and Longden, *ibid.*, p. 240.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMMUNION TABLE

In the reign of Edward VI. stone altars were directed to be replaced by wooden tables. The order was not, however, everywhere obeyed; for in 1559 Elizabeth expressly permitted those



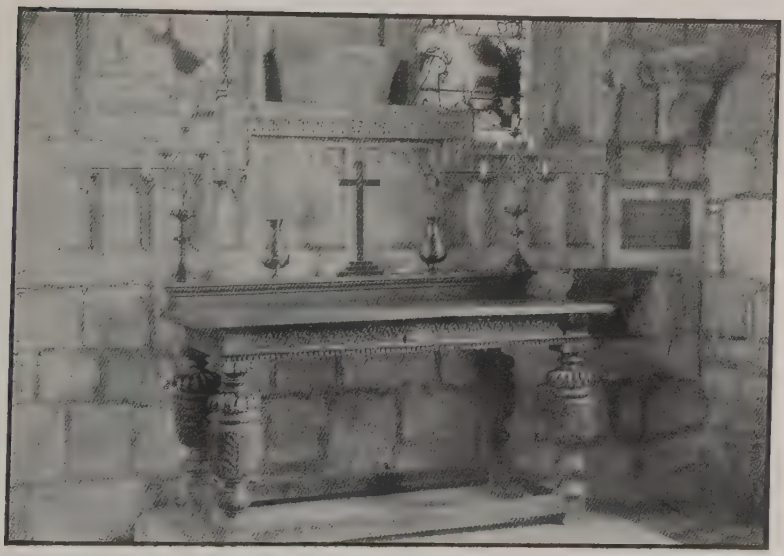
F. S.

Minehead, Somerset

who had stone altars to retain them if they chose. Ultimately, however, the wooden communion table generally superseded the ancient altar of stone, except sometimes in the case of minor altars. The changes and permutations in the history of the holy table are well illustrated at Ludlow. At Ludlow, in 1551,

G. W. S.

Weston Zoyland, Somerset



G. G. B.

Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire

temp. Edward VI. there was paid 9s. 4d. for a communion table. But on the accession of Mary, 11s. had to be paid for mending the "hie aulter." On the accession of Elizabeth, 3s. 4d. was paid for taking the altar down again, and 3s. 3d. for a new communion table. In 1550, at Wold, Edmund Perwyche left "to ye hyght aulter and now callyd the table of our Lord xiid." The two designations are blended at Brackley in a bequest "to the hye table in Seynt Peter's."[1]

C. F. N.

Beeston Regis, Norfolk

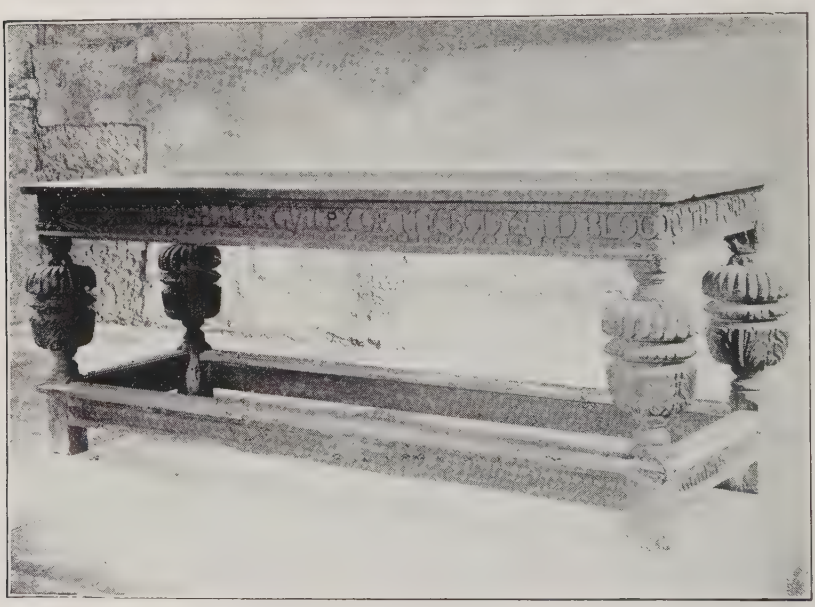
Tables of early date, secular or ecclesiastical, are scarce in England. In the great hall the oldest type usually consisted of trestles on which were placed boards; at the end of dinner both trestles and boards were cleared away so as to leave the hall space free. Many illustrations of these occur in illuminated manuscripts of the fifteenth century. By the time of the Reformation this type of table had gone out of use.

[1] Serjeantson and Longden's "*Parish Churches and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire*," in *Archæological Journal*, lxx. 231.

W. M. D.

Gwydyr Chapel, Llanrwst

A later form of table is that which has a solid slab instead of boards, and beneath has either trestles, or more often legs with spreading flanged feet splaying out from their base. These feet, however, like the trestles, were unattached to the board, so that both board and legs could be removed, if desired; such tables may be seen below the dais at Penshurst, and on the dais at Haddon Hall. This type of table was in much favour with the Puritans; for it enabled the table to be taken down easily and moved into the body of the church at the communion service. It



R. H. M.

Ombersley, Worcestershire

is recorded of John Austen of Adisham, Kent, that in 1553, when communion tables were ordered to be removed, "he with other tooke up the table and laid it on a chest in the chancel, *and set the tressels by it.*" In a paper printed in Strype's *Life of Parker*, it is noted that "in some places the table was joined" (*i.e.*, fastened to a frame), but "in others it stood upon *tressels.*" Bloxam speaks of a board and *trestles* having been removed from Aldesham church, Kent, on the accession of Queen Mary.[1] At Fraisthorpe, in Yorkshire, till recently, there was a stone slab on

[1] *Gothic Architecture*, ii. 107.

C. F. N.

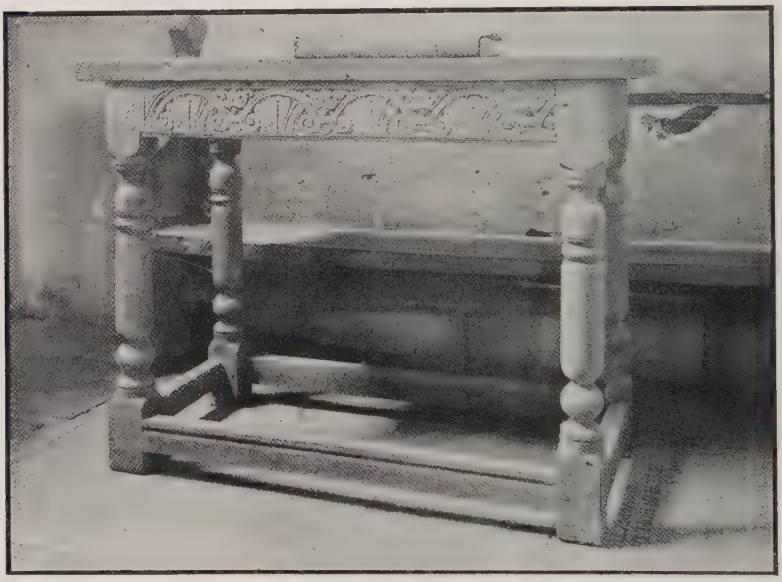
Fressingfield, Suffolk

G. G. B.

Astbury Cheshire

trestles; these were burnt at a recent "restoration."[1] In more instances than might be thought, the slabs of communion tables are still detachable; Mr R. H. Murray obtained records of more than thirty-five, all without exception having brackets and tops which are now or have been loose. Many tops are now fastened down by screws of wood or iron; such tops were detachable before screws came into use.[2]

The next type of table is that in which the slab is permanently fastened to a frame. Tables of this type, like early



P. B. B.

Chelvey, Somerset

chairs, have a tread-rail, so that the feet might be clear of the filthy rushes with which in the halls the floor was carpeted. Another peculiarity is their great height; several are over thirty-two inches high; this is the more remarkable, as chairs and benches were lower than now. The legs were usually placed at the corners of the board, and both Elizabethan and Jacobean examples were commonly ornamented with a big bulbous swelling or "melon," carved with scrolls, etc. Good specimens

[1] R. H. Murray's *Ancient Church Fittings*, p. 21.

[2] The top of the little communion table at Clapton-in-Gordano, Somerset, is detachable.—G. C. N.

of the earlier tables have their legs surmounted by an exquisitely molded shallow capital with volutes; *e.g.*, Minehead; and the bottom of the "stretchers" immediately above the capitals is edged with the boldly sculptured "jewel-molding" (106) The "melons" were often so enormous that they were not cut out of the solid, but, as also the volutes, were built up. Good examples of "melon-legged" tables remain at Weston Zoyland, Somerset (107); Blythford, Suffolk; Eaton Bray, Bedford (107); Beeston Regis, Norfolk (108); Llanrwst, N. Wales (109); Ombersley,

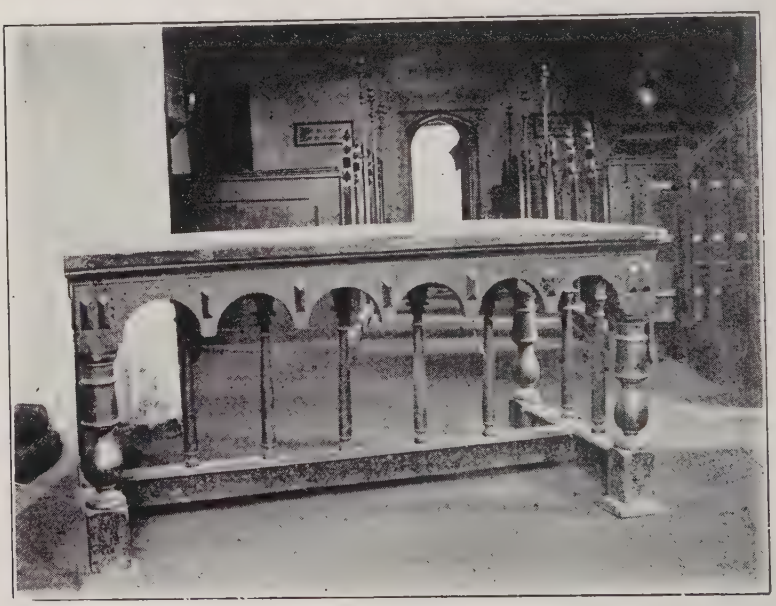
F. S.

Burlescombe, Devon

Worcester (110); Leeds Castle, Kent; and elsewhere. Usually they are of Elizabethan date, but that at Dinton, Bucks., is dated 1606; and other Jacobean examples exist.

As time went on, the "melon" degenerated into an elongated bulb encircled by a shallow groove, and having a straight member immediately beneath it: it also ceases to be carved. In some late tables the leg is merely a column with a blob on it, or slight entasis, as at Fressingfield, Suffolk (111), and Astbury, Cheshire (111). A much rarer type of seventeenth-century table is that which has the legs central instead of at

the corners; *e.g.*, the wrongly-designated "Wycliffe" table in Lutterworth church; and others in the halls of Wadham and Jesus Colleges, Oxford.[1] In Spetchley church, Worcester, is a table of late Jacobean date, with a central foot-rail carrying balusters which support the slab.[2] A simple example is illustrated from Chelvey, Somerset (112). The table in Haddenham church, Cambridge, has seven legs; that at St Dunstan's, Canterbury, has nine (115). A charming table at Skidbrook church, in the Lincolnshire marsh, has sixteen legs, viz., four slender balusters



R. H. M.

Spetchley, Worcestershire

at each corner. The table at Burlescombe, Devon, has a couple of front claws (113).

Some domestic tables had a sliding apparatus at each end, by means of which the top could be lengthened to twice its original size. Examples may be seen in the South Kensington Museum; the hall of the Vicars Choral, Exeter; Leeds Castle, Kent; St Dunstan's, Canterbury (115); All Saints', Hereford; Powick, Worcester; Upper Donhead, Wilts.; St Peter's, Cornhill,

[1] Coe's *Old Oak Furniture*, pp. 208-230.

[2] Illustrated in Murray's *Ancient Church Fittings*, p. 34.

London; and elsewhere. That at St Dunstan's, Canterbury (115), when closed, is 5 ft. 8 in. long; but when the leaves are

R. W.

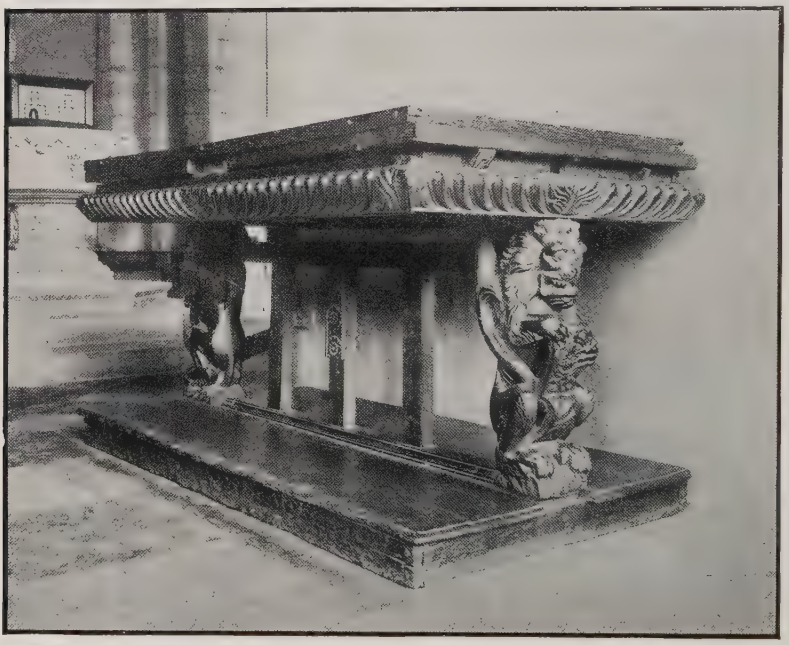
St Dunstan, Canterbury

R. W.

St Dunstan, Canterbury

drawn out its length is 10 ft. 8 in.; this particular table is of walnut, and may originally have been constructed for a dining-

room.[1] The oak table kept at the west end of Lutterworth church is about 5 ft. 6 in. long, 3 ft. wide, and 3 ft. high; the top leaf is 5 ft. 6 in. long and 2 ft. 9 in. wide; the lower leaves are in two half lengths, each 2 ft. 6 in. long; each of these, with its underframing, draws out endways, and then the top leaf drops in between them, making the table top, when extended, 10 ft. 6 in. long and 2 ft. 9 in. wide (116). In a church such a table, with the leaves pushed in, would be placed north and south against the eastern wall of the chancel, and when it was to be used, would



C. F. N.

Lutterworth, Leicester

be turned round and moved into the centre of the chancel or into the nave, and placed east and west,[2] and the communicants would sit round it on benches such as those which still remain in Wimborne minster, just as at an ordinary supper table.

[1] As a rule an altar or a communion table is of not less height than 3 ft. 3 in. for convenience of celebration.

[2] In 1643 the communion table was removed from the east end of the choir of Westminster abbey to the centre of the church for the communion of the House of Commons (Stanley's *Memorials*, p. 428).

A still further development of the "telescopic" table is to be seen at Kidderminster. In the chancel of the Congregational

F. B.

Theddlethorpe All Saints, Lincs.

C. B. S.

Brancepeth, Durham

church, Mill Street, is a massive plain communion table, 6½ ft. long, with a movable top; the legs at one end are mortised to receive other rails. It appears there were two tables exactly

counterparts, and that two loose rails and a loose top were fitted between, so that some twenty-six or twenty-seven communicants could sit round. The survivor of the two tables was purchased from the parish church in 1787.[1]

In Southwold church, Suffolk, is yet another variant. Here the communion table has leaves. Originally it had four leaves, making the table oval. The old verger informed Mr Murray that his father remembered it standing in the church. For the oval of the table may be compared that of St Stephen's, Walbrook, E.C., Wren's masterpiece (119).

C. F. N.

Halesworth, Suffolk

Some of the Elizabethan and Jacobean tables, especially in Devon and Somerset, are of much beauty; several have inscriptions recording the date and donor. At Whitwell, in the Isle of Wight, on the frieze under the slab, is carved in relief a hand holding a chalice, and the inscription: "I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. Anno Dom. 1632."

Towards the end of the seventeenth century the general massiveness of the old oak furniture diminished more and more, and the communion tables shared in the newer lightness of design. Sometimes both the table legs and the altar rails have

[1] Murray's *Ancient Church Fittings*, p. 32.

the slight twisted balusters which are characteristic of the elegant staircases of the period ; *e.g.*, both the communion table and the altar rails have twisted legs or balusters at Coberley, Gloucester ; the altar rails at Lewknor, Oxon., have twisted balusters dated 1699.[1]

In the eighteenth and well on into the nineteenth century communion tables were often of the smallest, meanest, and most paltry construction ; sometimes made of deal, and "grained." At Lufton, Somerset, the communion table was about 2 ft. long ; at Yaverland, in the Isle of Wight, it was 2 ft. 10 in.

F. R. T.

St Stephen's, Walbrook, London

long by 1 ft. 10 in. broad ; at Kingston, in the Isle of Wight, it was a common deal dressing-table with a drawer. In Jersey, so late as the middle of the nineteenth century, few churches had a decent altar or communion table ; at St Heliers a board was kept in the porch, and only brought into the church on communion Sundays.

Good churchmen, however, were not wholly extinct even in the eighteenth century.[2] Sometimes the slab of the table was of

[1] Twisted balusters, now placed round the font at Darenth, Kent, were probably originally altar rails.

[2] On Post-Reformation altars see *English Church Life from the Restoration to the Tractarian Movement*, by J. W. Legg, 1914, pp. 126-136.

marble, supported on an iron stand or on iron brackets fixed in the wall. A costly communion table of marble at Stean church, Northants, bears the inscription, "The gift of Nathanael, Lord Crewe, Lord Bishop of Durham, 1720." Other examples of communion tables of this period, with marble slabs, remain at Bulkington, Warwick, on the slab of which is sculptured a representation of the Last Supper; Chesterton, Hunts.; All Saints, Derby; Loughborough and Welham, Leicester; and Theddlethorpe All Saints, the queen of the Lincolnshire marshland. This church has the distinction of possessing a modern altar of wood, an Elizabethan communion table, and a marble altar slab (117). At Rye, Sussex, is an altar table of mahogany. The elaborate altar table at Brancepeth, Durham, is no doubt part of the sumptuous fittings put up by John Cosin, rector of Brancepeth from 1626 to 1633, and afterwards Bishop of Durham (117). At Durham, in 1634, there was "a fayre and rich Communion Table, which cost £200, standing at the High altar (*i.e.*, the altar *platform*), of blacke branch'd marble, supported with 6 fayre Columns of Touchstone, all built at the Charg of Dr Hunt the reverend Dean." At Halesworth, Suffolk, is a marble slab supported by legs, each of which is ornamented with grapes and wheat-ears, emblematic of the sacramental elements (118).

CHAPTER V

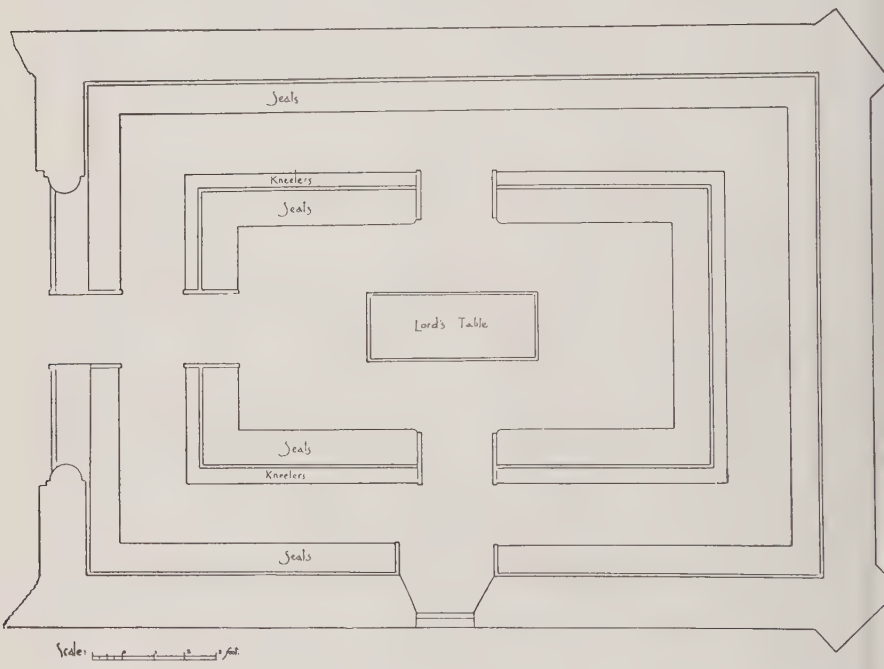
THE ALTAR RAILS AND HOUSELING CLOTH

The Altar Rails

Before the Reformation there was no need of altar rails; the altar was already fenced in by the screen, which every church possessed, at the entrance of the choir. Abroad, however, it would seem that altar rails sometimes existed; for Durandus, Bishop of Mende, writing in the thirteenth century, expressly mentions (p. 32) the rail by which the altar is divided from the choir, "which teacheth the separation of things celestial from things terrestrial." One object of railing in the altar was to prevent profanation by dogs, as is clearly shown in the Visitation Articles of the Caroline bishops, that the communion table should be "enclosed and ranged about with a rail of joiners' and turners' work close enough to keep out dogs from going in." And usually the rails are set so closely as to effect this purpose. At Trotton, Sussex, Mr P. M. Johnston even found in the tower a section of the rails with transverse bars, still better to keep out dogs; this has been replaced in the chancel. It is rare to find rails so wide apart that a dog can squeeze through, but this is so at Bramley, Surrey.

Both as to the posture of the communicant and as to the position of the table and of the rails very bitter controversies reigned between the Puritans and the High Church party. To emphasise their adherence to the view that the Eucharist was simply a commemorative supper, some of the extremists refused not only to kneel at the altar rails, but even to enter the chancel at all. They insisted that the communion table should be brought down into the nave and set east and west, and that the communion should be administered to them sitting on benches round it; or else "sitting in their pews in the body of the church," as we are told was done at Eastwell, Kent, in 1584. That this was no exceptional case is shown by the words of another writer, who says, "As for the custom (which in too many

places is of late crept in) of the priests carrying of the holy bread and cup to every person *in their seats*, it is both unseemly and derogatory to the majesty of those sacred mysteries." In 1641 a petition was laid before Parliament against Dr Haywood, by the parishioners of St Giles in the Fields, that "some of the parishioners desiring to receive the Sacrament *in their pues*, were denied it and sent away without it." Bishop Wren asks in 1662 whether the parishioners "with all Christian reverence come

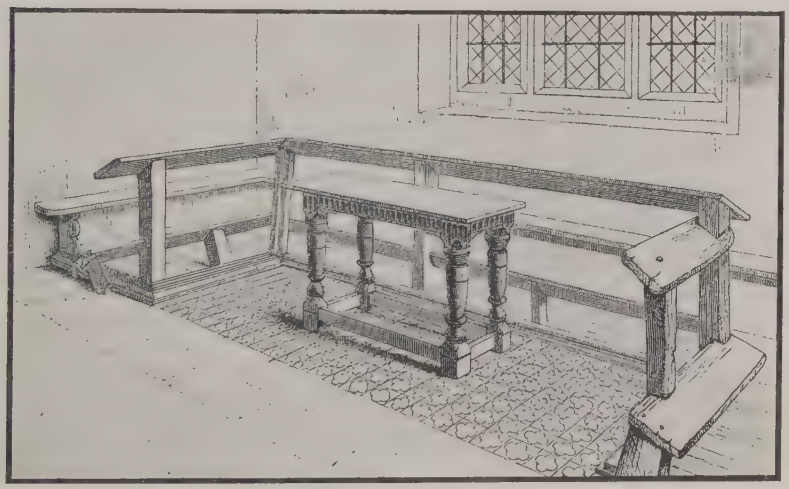


R. H. M. Hales, Gloucestershire

before the Lord's table? And not (after the most contemptuous and unholy usage of some, if men did rightly consider) *sit still in their seats or pewes* to have the blessed Body and Blood of our Saviour go up and down to seek them all the church over." This custom lingered much later than might be supposed. At St Mary's, Oxford, early in the nineteenth century, the stalls in the chancel used to be covered with "houseling cloths" for the communicants in readiness for the sacrament to be brought round to them. Also at Christ Church, Oxford, up to 1856, it was the custom for the communicants to remain in their seats—

it is to be presumed that they knelt—while the celebrants walked round to communicate each; Dr Pusey, of all men, used to administer in this way. The same was the case at Trinity College, Cambridge, some fifteen years later.

In many cases the seats referred to were stalls in the chancel; but there were also many who desired to communicate in their seats in the nave, and that for this purpose the communion table should be brought down into the body of the nave. This procedure is plainly contemplated in the last rubric before the order for the administration of the Lord's Supper in the present Prayer Book, which orders that the table at the communion



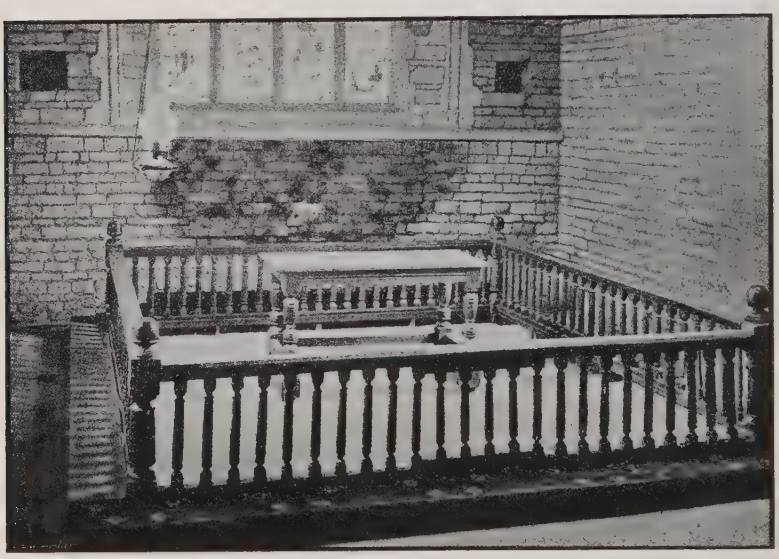
M. H. B.

Langley Chapel, Salop

time shall stand *in the body of the church* or in the chancel. But when the rector of Eynsham, Oxon., *c.* 1866, moved the altar into the middle of the church without faculty, the bishop and the chancellor of the diocese compelled him to replace it in its original position.

Another party of Puritans, less extreme, was willing to enter the chancel; but in some cases not till the words "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent. . . . Draw near," were reached. This custom also survived here and there till recent times, *e.g.*, at the early Eucharist in Westminster abbey in 1860. But even in the chancel great diversity of practice prevailed. One form of protest against High Church doctrine was to receive the

communion standing.[1] There are records that in 1611 the laity stood at the communion service in St Michael's, Coventry. At Bristol about 1840 the men stood during the communion service, but only till the reading of the epistle, and in 1876 the "Red Maids" were instructed to continue to do the same. Baxter's congregation at Kidderminster used to communicate standing, but he allowed them to kneel if they liked. We hear of "great trouble in Coventry about the receiving of the communion;

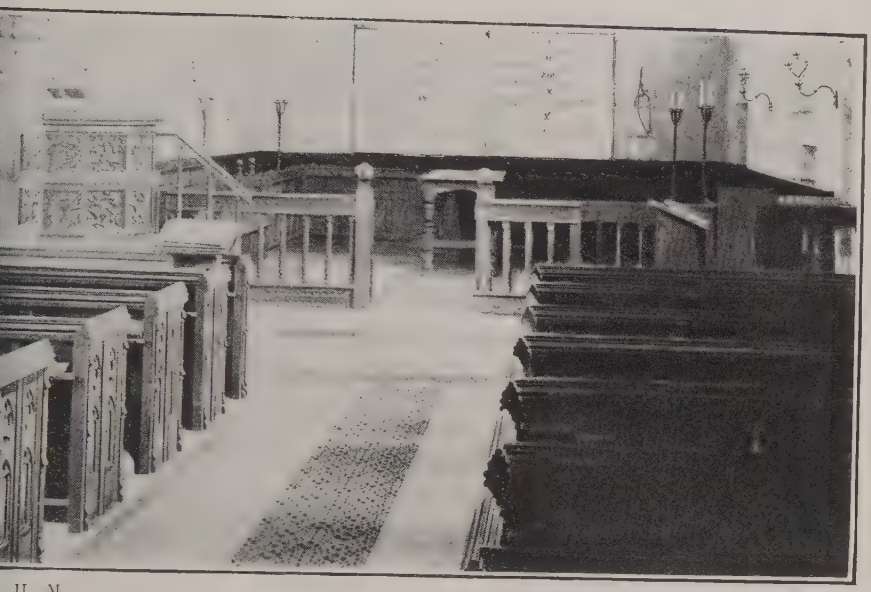


R. H. M.

Lyddington, Rutland

there were seats made for the people in the chancel; before this time they took it *standing*, but now they are commanded to take it kneeling, to the grief of many." They were not allowed to take it standing for long; for when in 1621 Coventry wanted a new charter, King James refused to grant it unless he had a certificate that all had conformed by *kneeling*. This led to much correspondence. The bishop first reported that all but seven

[1] It may be urged that this was a survival of Early Christian ritual, as in the catacombs, where standing is the attitude of prayer; but this is hardly likely to have survived to Puritan times.



H. M.

Deerhurst, Gloucestershire

C. F. N.

West Stafford, Dorset

of any note had conformed; and afterwards that all but three had done so.[1]

With others the protest against high sacramental views took the form of sitting at table in domestic fashion: in this case the communicants sat upon long forms or benches, such as those which survive at Wimborne minster, now arranged in a row to serve as altar rails. In 1551 the churchwardens of North Elmham paid "for the setting of a long form standing in the chancel for *to sit down upon* in the time of the communion ij." The churchwardens of Melton Mowbray, in 1567, "paid for the 6 seats for the communion table xijd." In 1627 the church-

H. B. P.

Cliffe at Hoo, Kent

wardens of Theydon-Garnon were "presented for having their chancel unseated." Even if we had no documentary evidence, we should be sure that the communicants ofttimes sat at the communion from the construction of some of the tables. For some tables were "telescopic"; *i.e.*, had leaves which could be pulled out so as to lengthen the slab. Others had leaves which folded over, with the same object. At Kidderminster two tables were placed in a line some distance apart, and the space bridged over by additional boards, so to make one table of great length. There can have been no motive for these various extensions except to enable a large number of communicants to *sit* all round

[1] Murray on *Ancient Church Fittings*, p. 30.

the table. It is to be noted, moreover, that communion tables are frequently ornamented or inscribed on all four sides, and therefore must have been intended to stand free, and not against the east wall of the chancel; *e.g.*, at Ombersley, Worcester, the inscription—

"WHOSOEVER EATETH AND DRINKETH UNWORTHILY IS GUILTY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF OUR LORD"

runs all round the communion table (110). In 1550 the church of the Austin Friars in the city of London was granted to the

F. H. C.

St Decuman's, Somerset

Dutch settlers. The communion table is 29 ft. long, and the custom is, or used to be, that "the pastor and wife sit in centre, with the females to right of pastor's wife and the men to left of pastor; the cup is passed from hand to hand, one each way."[1]

Another step in the direction of greater devoutness was to provide the communicants with seats round three or four sides of the holy table, kneeling desks being interposed between the seats and the table. Other communicants, again, were willing to kneel while in the chancel, but not at any altar rails; and

[1] Murray's *Evolution of Church Chancels*, p. 78.

some of the bishops were content and thankful to get so much conceded. Wheatley, in his *Church of England Man's Companion* in 1714, gives a picture of communicants, in five rows, kneeling on the chancel floor in front of the rails. Bishop Montague in 1639 published the following directions: "That the communicants, being entered (into the chancel), shall be disposed of orderly in their several ranks, leaving sufficient

C. F. N.

Great Walsingham, Norfolk

room for the priest or minister to go between them, by whom they were to be communicated one rank after another, until they had all of them received."[1] Udall also, in a pamphlet entitled *Communion Comeliness*, speaks of double and triple rows of communicants in the chancel.

Finally, there were the old-fashioned church people, who knelt at the altar rails to receive the communion.

[1] Perry's *History of the Church of England*, p. 12.

As to the position of the communion table, there was equal divergence of practice. In 1559 the injunction of Queen Elizabeth had directed "that the Holy Table in every church be set in the place where the altar stood." This injunction, however, received diverse interpretations in practice. In some, though not all, of the cathedrals and the royal chapels, the holy table was placed as of old, north and south at the east end of the choir. But it was usual at times of communion to turn the table round so as to be east and west, and to place it in the middle of the choir. This was the case even in Canterbury cathedral in

R. B. B.

Great Staughton, Hunts.

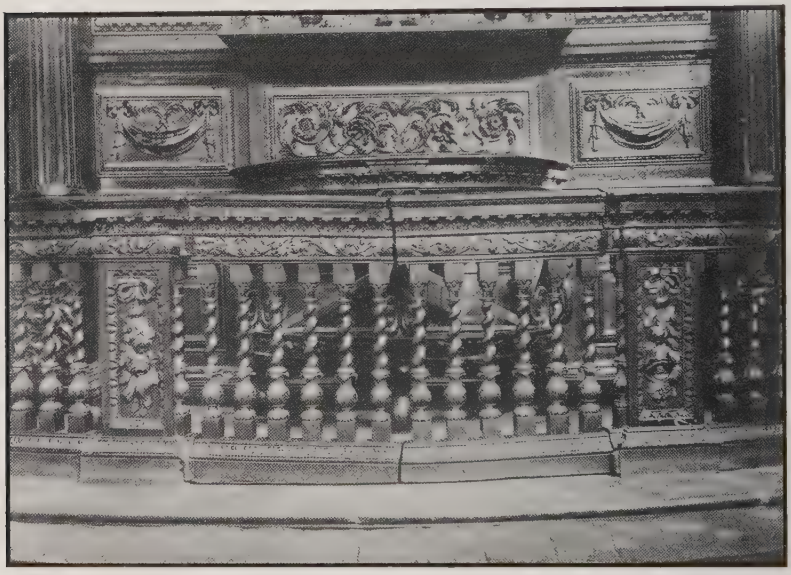
1563; where, if the early part only of the communion service was sung, the communion table stood "northe and southe, wheare the high aulter did stande."[1] But on the first Sunday of every month there was an administration of the holy communion, and "the Table is sett Easte and weaste."[2] Archbishop Laud, in his speech in the Star Chamber,[3] admits that though in the royal

[1] In the chancel of the Huguenot church in the Black Prince's chantry in Canterbury cathedral, the communion table stands east and west, and is surrounded by backed benches to the north, east, and south.

[2] Legg and Hope's *Inventory*, p. 209.

[3] Laud's *Works*, VI. i. 59.

chapels and divers cathedrals the holy table hath ever since the Reformation stood north and south at the upper end of the choir, yet "it stood in most parish churches the other way." This probably means that the table, after the administration, was moved back to or near the eastern wall, and was turned so as to be east and west when in use. This, however, by no means satisfied High Churchmen. They wanted the table to *remain* north and south at all times. And we may be sure that they had the powerful support of the



F. R. T.

London, St Stephen's, Walbrook

parish clerk, who must have found it a heavy task to take to pieces, remove, and put together again a heavy communion table before and after every administration of the rite. No doubt this was one potent reason why the tendency was in the parish churches to let the holy table, once removed to the east wall of the chancel, stay there. However that may be, a change had to come with the accession of Laud to power, with a High Churchman on the throne willing to back him up. From the first Laud had shown himself determined to extirpate the new fashions of communion. While Dean of Gloucester, he had succeeded in moving the communion table of the cathedral back

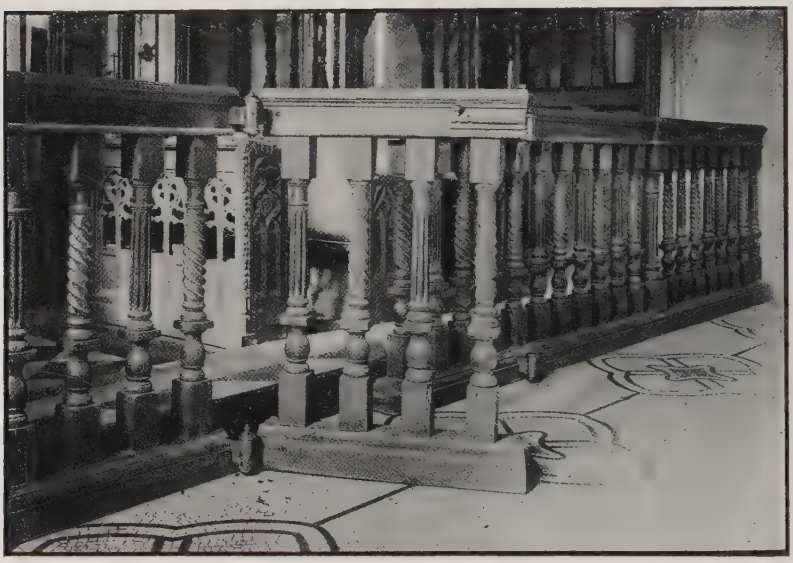
to the east end of the chancel. As archbishop he directed, though with no binding sanction, "that all churches and chapels do conform themselves in this particular" (that the holy table occupy the same position as the ancient altar) "to the example of the cathedral or mother churches." Moreover, he insisted that the altar should be railed in—which was done usually *on three sides*—and that the table should remain in one fixed position at all times, viz., against the east wall. This was in

E. K. P.

Woodbury, Devon

1634. To a considerable extent his efforts were successful. A great number of these Laudian three-sided railings must have been constructed; some presented by Laud himself: their interesting history has availed to save very few from destruction. They had the advantage not only of bringing practice nearer to Catholic usage, and of keeping dogs out, but also stopped once for all the practice of placing the communion table in the nave. In the following churches the rails are reported to have been formerly placed on three sides of the communion

table:[1] Brill, Bucks.; Wyke Champflower, Somerset; Coventry St Michael, before 1611; Dartmouth, Devon; Fenny Compton, Warwick, up to about 1850; Langley chapel, Salop, 1601; Langley Marish, Bucks.; Lytchett Matravers, Dorset; Mallwydd, Merioneth; Over Whichendon, Bucks.; Poynings, Sussex; Puddleton, Dorset; Shillingford, Berks.; Shotteswell, Warwick; Shrivenham, Berks.; St Matthew, Walsall, till *c.* 1870; Waltham, Leicester, till *c.* 1785; Weston Beggard, Hereford; Wiggenhall St Mary the Virgin, Norfolk, destroyed in 1862; Wimborne minster, 1610; Wargrave, Berks.; St Martin cum Gregory, York;



F. H. C.

Rose Ash, Devon

and the Dutch church of Austin Friars, London. In the attic of Parshall Hall are railings placed on three sides of a table, all probably brought from Elmley Lovett church, of which the owner of Parshall Hall was churchwarden when Parliament in 1643 ordered Laudian rails, etc., to be removed. It will be noticed that all the dated examples fall within ten years; the earliest being Langley chapel, 1601, and the latest Wimborne and Coventry, 1610 and 1611 (123). It is possible, however, that

[1] See also Bloxam's *Companion*, p. 174. The original arrangement has so often been altered or destroyed that it cannot always be known whether there were three or four rows of seats or rails round the table.

the work done at St Michael's, Worcester, in 1592, refers to seats on three sides of the chancel : —[1]

"Item, Timber, Boards and Planks to make 3 seats in the Quire - - - - vs. xd.
Item, Nails and hinges - - - - xxd.
Item, Labour - - - - iijs. ijd.
6 Turned Bosses - - - - vid."

There used to be a curious variant at St Osyth, Essex, where the enclosure, instead of occupying three sides of a square, was

G. G. B.

Astbury, Cheshire

an oval interrupted by an opening to the west ; so also formerly at Heacham, Norfolk.

To the move of Laud by which the holy table was placed close to the east wall, and railed in so that it could perambulate no more into the nave, an ingenious countermove was played by the Puritans. This was to place an additional set of seats and rails on the *east* side of the table, thus breaking Canon VII. very completely in spirit without infringing the letter of it. This produced several sets of rails which surrounded the altar on all *four* sides. It was an arrangement not peculiar to

[1] Murray's *Evolution of Chancels*, p. 79.

England; *e.g.*, it was found in Lyons cathedral before the French Revolution; here, however, the railings practically formed a screen to a detached altar. At Hales, Gloucester, 1603, the chancel, as shown in the plan, is *double-seated* on all four sides. The back seats have in front both book rests and "kneelers"; those who sat in the front seats must have had hassocks to kneel on. In another case it is distinctly stated that "the quality" *sat* on seats behind, and the commoner sort knelt in front. More often the chancel was *single-seated* on all four sides. At Branscombe, Devon, the rails are later than 1610, being fitted on a tomb of that date; at a later time they were moved close up to the east wall. The rails

W. M. D.

Winchester Cathedral

at Lyddington, Rutland, in the diocese of Lincoln, are of historic interest. It is said that the vicar had disregarded Archbishop Laud's order to move the table up to the east wall, and rail it in. Bishop Williams of Lincoln, who was a bitter opponent of Laud, and had a palace at Lyddington, now an almshouse, backed up the vicar; but, finding that he was to be cited before the Star Chamber,[1] bade the vicar fence it in, not as Laud intended, on three sides, but on four sides, thus keeping the communion table permanently separated from the east wall, as it remains to this day; the rails bear the date 1635 (124). Other chancels which have or had this arrangement are Beckington, Somerset; Bristol All Saints, and Bristol St

[1] Murray's *Evolution of Chancels*, p. 83.

W. M. D.

Winchester Cathedral

W. M. D.

Winchester Cathedral

Peter's; Deerhurst, Gloucester; Ermington, Devon; Leonard Stanley, Gloucester; St Martin's, Ongar; Milverton, Somerset; Toddington, Gloucester; Westbury-on-Trym, Gloucester; Winchcombe, Gloucester, destroyed in 1855 (125). Gumfreston, Pembroke, used to have four rows of seats round the table; in 1868 they were replaced by forms.

In 1643 Parliament was supreme, and passed an Act "for the utter demolishing, removing and taking away of all monuments of superstition and idolatry"; and doubtless many altar rails now perished. Where, however, the Elizabethan practice of moving the communion table backward and forward to the nave was retained, there could never have been any altar rails of any kind. Whatever the reason, many churches seem to have been without rails till a later period. So late as 1704, Bishop Nicholson found thirty-five unrailed chancels in the diocese of Carlisle.[1] A few years earlier a book published in 1695 (*Notes upon the Lord Bp. of Salisbury's Four Late Discourses*, p. 24), says, "The communion table in some places is railed about, in many 'tis even left as open as any other part of the church." But more and more the tendency was to put up altar rails; in the great majority of cases, soon after the Restoration of 1660. And when they were put up, they were no longer put up either in the Laudian or the Puritan fashion round the holy table, but in a single continuous row to the west of it. But though now we find them, with the few exceptions enumerated above, so constructed, that is, with the altar rails extending across the chancel in a straight line, it will be found in very numerous cases, if the carpentry be carefully examined, that this was not their original position, but that they stood either on three or on four sides of the communion table.[2]

As time went on, of course, the design changed with the times. In the main the design naturally followed the contemporaneous patterns of the legs of tables and chairs, and the balusters of the stairs of pulpit and gallery.

The simplest form of railing consists of nothing but a row of forms. Dr Cox, in *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 104, notes that at St Edmund's, Sarum, there was paid in 1550, for "the legging of a *forme* to serve for people when they do receive the Communion, 1d."; and again in 1626, for "*furmes* provided for the communicants *to kneel upon*, 5s."; and in 1593, at St

[1] Cox's *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 105.

[2] Some churches have no central entrance in the altar railings, but a passage either at one end or both ends of the railings; *e.g.*, Chew Magna, Somerset.—G. C. N.

Martin's, Leicester, "paid to Goodman Kirk for two mats for the *formes* to the Communion table, 8d."

A very common type was that of balusters with a central bulge; good examples are illustrated from West Stafford, Dorset (125), and Cliffe at Hoo, Kent (126).

W. M.

Farnham, Surrey

A somewhat rarer type straightens the central bulge, as at St Decuman's, Somerset (127); and sometimes there is a tendency to revert to columnar design, as at Great Walsingham, Norfolk (128).

Another variant is the twisted baluster common in staircases and furniture. A charming example is illustrated from Great Staughton church, Hunts. (129); and a still more elaborate one

from St Stephen's, Walbrook, London (130). As a rule, these twisted balusters belong to the first half of the eighteenth century; but some may be earlier.

At Woodbury, Devon (131), the baluster type is completely abandoned for a Roman Corinthian column, with due entasis and single fluting above and double fluting below. At Rose Ash, Devon (132), there is a less complete break from the baluster type, and the columns are alternately twisted and fluted.

F. H. C.

St Decuman's, Somerset

At Astbury, Cheshire (133), are railings, the design of which seems to be based more or less on Dutch strapwork.

Finally, columns and balusters are both discarded in favour of foliated panels of classical type; of these exceptionally fine examples are illustrated from Winchester cathedral (134), attributed to Grinling Gibbons; the church of Farnham, near which is the palace of the Bishop of Winchester (137); and St Decuman's, Somerset, which are dated 1688 (138).[1] Somewhat similar work occurs at Farleigh, near Hungerford. Worth

[1] This is from the door of the Wyndham pew, which stands in what is known as St Peter's chapel in the north aisle of St Decuman's.

church, Sussex, possesses ornate railings, which, like the pulpit, may be of Dutch origin.

Other materials than wood are occasionally employed. St James's, Piccadilly, possesses a grand altar railing of marble; in Lichfield cathedral is an alabaster railing of fine design by the late Mr Kempe. At All Hallows, Barking, is a costly balustrade of brass.

On the whole, altar rails have received very little study or notice, considering the exceptional interest that attaches to their history, plan, and design. The result has been that vast numbers have been destroyed, leaving a gap in the history of the church, and have been replaced by cast-iron standards carrying a brass or oak rail of "shop" pattern, memorials of early Victorian taste. Others have been removed and put to some inappropriate use, *e.g.*, to barricade a font, as at Darenth, Kent. At Gatcombe, in the Isle of Wight, the altar rails bore the inscription :—

"I WILL WASH MINE HANDS IN INNOCENCY: SO WILL I COMPASSE THINE ALTAR, O LORD. CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD, AND RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME."

These rails have been cut up, and the inscription now surmounts a modern screen :[1] this is to falsify the history of a church, which is even worse than to obliterate it.

[1] Cox and Harvey, p. 17.

Houseling Cloth

Housel is an Old English and Gothic word signifying "a sacrifice," but in use is almost always restricted to the Elements at the Mass, to the Mass itself, or to the administration or the reception of the Elements. In the secondary sense it occurs at least as early as Bede, *c.* 900. More, in 1534, says, "Holy men in their writings have called this blessed holy housell by the name of a sacrament." Becon, in 1564, has "to celebrate the Lord's supper, or as the Papists term it, to take their Hushel, or to receive their Maker."

In 1519 we read of "a great parish in Lancashire and hath 7,000 howseling people and more"; every one over fourteen being considered a houseling person, *i.e.*, one who received the sacrament.

The historian, Lingard, states that "from the arrival of Augustine till the Reformation the English name for the eucharist was the housel."

The ancient usage was revived by Tennyson and Morris:—

> "So the stately Queen abode . . . nor sought
> Wrapt in her grief for housel or for shrift."
>
> —*Guinevere*, p. 146.

> "And then, being houselled, did he eat and drink."
>
> — *Earthly Paradise*, i. 336.[1]

The houseling cloth was a long towel, or linen or rarely a silken sheet, held before the communicants as they knelt to receive the Eucharist; its purpose being to catch any particles of the sacrament which, through accident, might be suffered to fall during the administration. When altar rails were introduced into our churches, the houseling cloths were often spread over them, as they are to this day at Wimborne minster. The benches and stools remain in Brecon priory church; till the "restoration" of 1874 there were no altar rails. Houseling cloths were in use at Chesterfield *c.* 1840, and at Thame till 1841. In 1874 they were still in use at St Mary, Oxford; Prestbury, Gloucester; All Saints, Lambeth; St Peter's, Hereford; and Holmer, Mordiford, and Westhide, Herefordshire; at Swayfield, Lincolnshire, they were placed over the

[1] *New English Dictionary*, v. 423.

whole length of the altar rails. Twenty years later they were said to be still in use at Leamington; Sellack, Hereford; Holyrood, Southampton; St Bride's Major, Glamorgan; and St German's, Cornwall; the popular idea in the last case being that it was to prevent the dresses of the squire's ladies being soiled. The *Ecclesiologist* of February 1859 prints the following letter from a clergyman: "I was called upon to-day to administer communion in a church in the heart of London. One poor old woman from Bristol who communicated, when she knelt at the altar step, deliberately spread her white, or rather yellow-white, handkerchief along the rail before communicating." And it has been suggested that the clean white handkerchief in which old-fashioned folk in the memory of many of us used to carry their prayer books was a survival of the housel cloth. About 1884, at Bolam, in Northumberland, the vicar's housemaid one day was seen preparing the altar for the monthly celebration. Part of her work consisted in tying on to the altar rails a cloth of the same colour as the altar cloth, blue, so as to hang down on both sides.

In the inventories of Ockley, Send, Thorpe, and Sutton in Surrey for 1552, "houseling towels" are mentioned. In 1574 St Bartholomew, Smithfield, had two "communion towels." On Easter Day, 1593, "Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth received the cup, having a most princely lined cloth laid on her cushion pillow and borne at the four ends by the noble Earl of Hereford, the Earl of Essex, the Earl of Worcester, and the Earl of Oxford; the side of the said cloth Her Majesty took up in her hand, and therewith took the foot of the golden and now sacred cup, and . . . did drink of the same most devoutly, all this while kneeling on her knees." At a coronation the houseling towel used to be held by a bishop, or a bishop and assistants; this ceremonial was observed for the last time at the coronation of George IV.[1]

Entries in *Churchwardens' Accounts*[2] show that houseling cloths were in use before the Reformation; *e.g.*, at Ashburton, Devon, in 1546, there was paid "for x yards of linen for towels called housslyng cloths, xxd." The inventory of St Lawrence, Reading, made in 1517, includes seven towels of diaper; as some of these were from 7 to 9 yards long, they were probably houseling cloths for communicants. The inventory of Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire, shows that this small church possessed

[1] *Hierurgica Anglicana*, i. 127, and Wickham Legg's *English Coronation Records*, p. lxii.

[2] Cox, pp. 103, 131, 132.

five long towels, 29, 19, 8, 5, and 3 yards respectively, and eight small towels. Several entries occur also in Post-Reformation accounts; *e.g.*, in 1602, St Botolph, Cambridge, bought "Two Lyninge Towells for the Chancell at Communion tymes"; and in 1617, St Margaret, Westminster, paid "for twenty yards of diaper towelling for the desks, £2. 3s. 4d." To St Dunstan's, E.C., was bequeathed "a diaper towel of 15 yards in length to serve there at the houseling time of the parishioners there." The houseling cloth is frequently represented in illuminated MSS.; sometimes it is held by two acolytes or clerks.

CHAPTER VI

THE PISCINA AND CREDENCE

The Piscina

The piscina is the drain by which the water used for various ablutions at the altar passes through the wall or the floor into consecrated ground. It was styled indifferently "piscina," "lavacrum," "sacrarium," and "lavatory." Goar (1647) says: "The Latins apply this name of 'piscina,' 'lavacrum,' or 'sacrarium,' to the place appointed for getting rid of the sacred ablutions, and the ash of sacred substances consumed by fire, and any other fragments of holy things." Durandus, in the *Rationale*, says: "Prope altare, quod Christum significat, collocatur piscina seu lavacrum, in quo manus lavantur." In the contract for the building of Catterick church, the piscina is styled "*lavatorie*." In the contract for Fotheringhay church it is stipulated that there shall be "in either wall three lyghts and *lavatoris* in either side of the wall, which shall serve for four Auters."

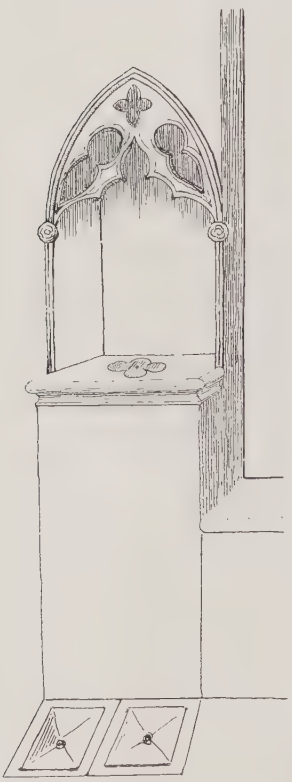
The presence of a piscina is usually evidence that somewhere in its neighbourhood there was originally an altar. In a sacristy, as at Lincoln and Selby, the piscina is simply a sink for washing things in general, and its presence does not necessarily denote there was an altar in the sacristy, though many sacristies contained an altar. On the other hand, it was probably not always possible for every altar to have a separate piscina; that this was so appears from the Fotheringhay contract quoted above; in this case we may suppose that the ablutions would be carried in a basin to the nearest piscina.

The real washing of the hands, of course, took place before service. The ministers, and not merely the celebrant, anciently washed their hands before handling the sacred vessels.[1] At Alvechurch, Worcester, till late in the nineteenth century, the

[1] *Ecclesiologist*, viii. 330.

custom prevailed of the priest washing his hands in the vestry before the administration of the sacrament, and napkins were brought to dry his hands. The custom is said to have prevailed also at St George the Martyr, Queen's Square, London.[1]

At the altar the simplest form of the ablutions was that water was poured over the fingers of the celebrant, a pair of basins being employed. Thus a manuscript of the eleventh century[2] says: "Whatever fever patient drank water, which flowed from the hands of the priest at the ablutions in the Mass, presently recovered." Again, in the twelfth century,[3] in the Cistercian use, the minister, after helping the celebrant to vest, is to pour water over the celebrant's hands: "postea infundat ei aquam in manibus." So again Durandus speaks of the chaplain kneeling and pouring water over the hands of the bishop at Pontifical Mass: "fundens flexis genibus aquam super manus ejus." The ceremonial of the ablution of the hands at the altar varied in different places, and in different periods, and in different services. The chief ablution took place when, after the censing, the celebrant went to the south side of the altar, and water was poured over his hands, while he said the psalm commencing, "Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas; et circumdabo altare tuum, Domine."[4] But this ablution was by no means the only one. Durandus describes no less than four sets of ablutions taking place at a Pontifical Mass: (1) while the bishop is putting on the sacred vestments; (2) immediately after reading the offertory; (3) after the censing; (4) after putting off the vest-



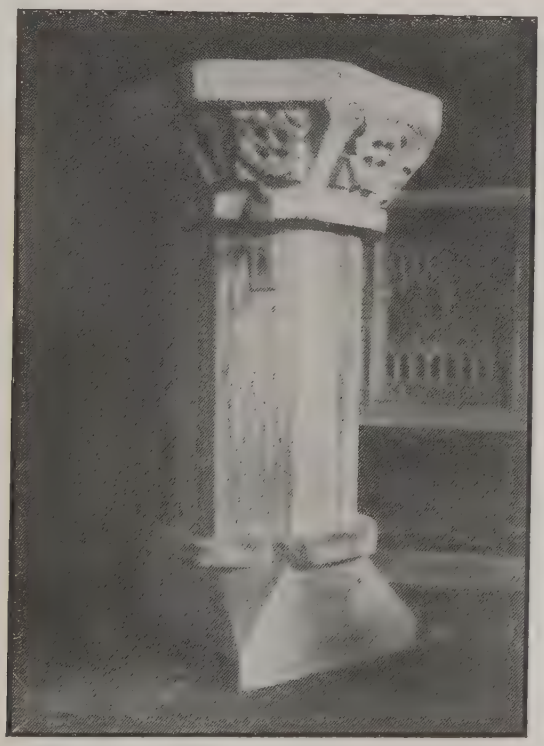
H. B. P.

Barton Bendish, Norfolk

[1] Bloxam, ii. 93. [2] In Martene, p. 215. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 151.

[4] In England the psalm *Lavabo* was not used, at any rate not according to the Use of Sarum, which was that generally adopted. Instead, the priest said a sentence beginning *Munda me Domine.* See Frere's *Use of Sarum.*—S. J. M. P.

ments. At Cluny, near the high altar, was a great aumbry or sink, over which all the chalices of the church were washed every morning; into this also was poured the water in which the "corporals" had been immersed preparatory to their being washed.[1] In the present Roman Catholic use, after the celebrant has received the Sacrament, he cleanses the sacred vessels, and during this



C. F. N.

Bodmin, Cornwall

first rinsing with wine he prays, "Quod ore sumpsimus, Domine," etc.; and again, before a second rinsing with wine and water, "Corpus tuum, Domine, quod sumpsi," etc. It is to be noted that the chalice was always rinsed at the altar with wine, or with wine and water, though after the Mass was over, it might be again rinsed with water at a piscina.

[1] *Ecclesiologist*, viii. 359.

There was a curious diversity about the construction of the English piscina. Till about the middle of the thirteenth century the piscina was usually a single drain. But till the early years of the fourteenth century it was generally double. How was it that the double piscina came into use? The usual explanation is that one drain was used to receive the rinsings from the hands, the other from the chalice. This explanation, however, requires a good deal of qualification. The change probably had its origin in the Berengarian controversy on the Real Presence in the Eucharist, which led to increased care and more reverential handling of the Blessed Sacrament. This was *c.* 1050 to

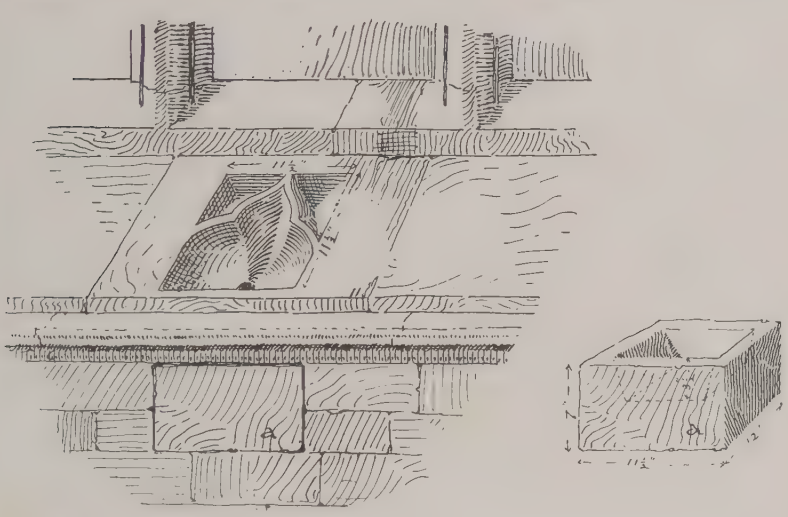
C. F. N.

Bodmin, Cornwall

c. 1100, and the subject was dealt with in legislation by more than one Council; up to this time there had been no controversy with regard to the Real Presence either in the Eastern or the Western Church. Finally the Lateran Council defined the principle of Transubstantiation in 1216. Another important date is 1264, when the Feast of Corpus Christi was instituted. Side by side with these dates may be set the Sarum *Consuetudinary*, *c.* 1210, and the Sarum *Customary*, *c.* 1264. Again, Edmund Rich was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1234 to 1245, and the canonist Lyndwood[1] quotes from a constitution of his, entitled *In Celebratione*, the following sentence: "Si vero de patina, sicut quidam faciunt, eam (Hostiam) sumat,

[1] Pp. 234, 235 of the 1679 edition.

tam patinam quam calicem faciet *aqua perfundi*, vel solum calicem si eam non sumat de patina." Then, in his gloss on *aqua perfundi*, Lyndwood explains that the washing of the chalice, or of the chalice and paten, as the case may be, must be *after the Mass is over*. We therefore find practised at this period at least three sets of rinsings or ablutions. First, *at the altar during Mass*, there was rinsing of the chalice and of the priest's fingers with wine, which rinsings were swallowed by the priest. Secondly, the priest then *left the altar*, and his hands were washed with water (*ablutis manibus*); this would



J. J. C.

Grantham

take place at a piscina. Thirdly, *after Mass*, there were washings, as pointed out above, of the chalice or of the chalice and paten; this also took place at a piscina. For these two purposes a double piscina was desirable, and was provided.

Early in the fifteenth century there was a reversion to the single piscina. By this time Low Mass had become popular; and through its influence there was a tendency to abbreviate and simplify High Mass.[1] By 1422 it appears from Lyndwood that the priest no longer left the altar to wash his hands at a piscina; water was poured over his fingers *at the altar*, and then conveyed to a piscina. It seems to have been thought

[1] Mabillon's *Musei Italici*, vol. ii., p. 325.

no longer necessary to provide a separate piscina for this purpose; and the same piscina appears to have been used which was employed after Mass to receive the water in which the chalice or the chalice and paten were washed.[1]

It may be noted that, by exception, three drains occur at Rothwell, Northants, and Salley abbey, Craven. At Castle Ashby, Northants, is a remarkable piscina; at the bottom there are two trefoiled basins, but above is a shelf with a third basin; above that is a second shelf for the cruets. These examples argue that there was not a rigid uniformity about the ceremonials of the ablutions.

F. B.

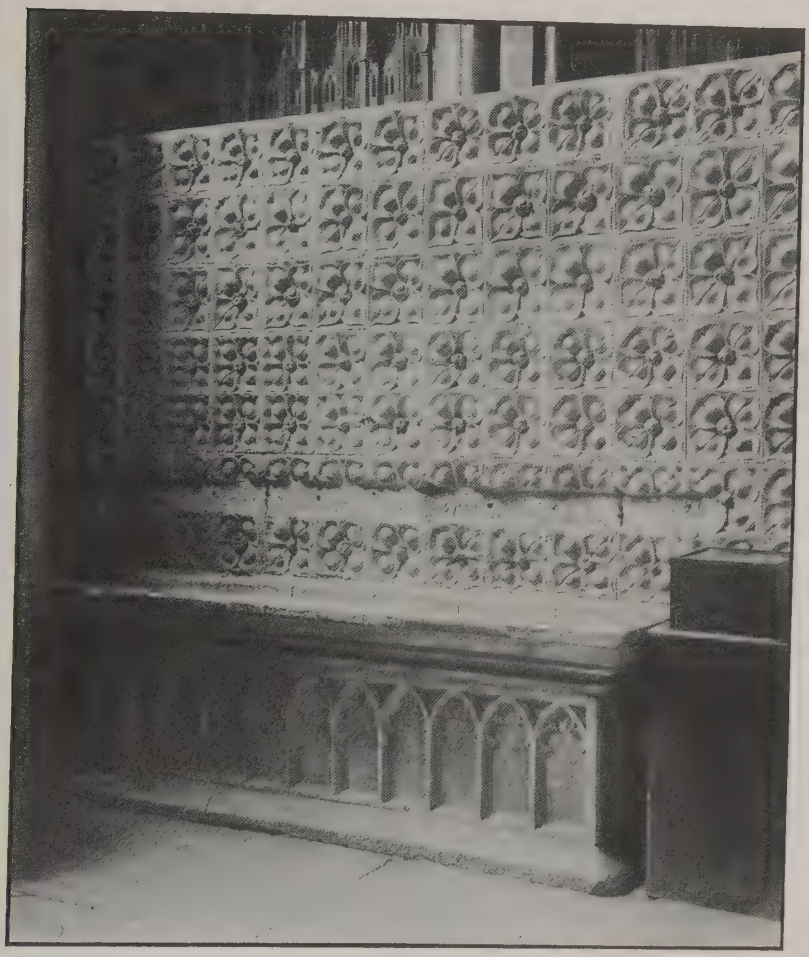
Grantham

The earliest reference to a piscina is made by Bede, who says that when the bones of King Oswald of Northumbria were washed, "ipsam aquam in qua laverunt ossa in angulo sacrarii fuderunt." This does not refer to ablutions at the altar, but it does prove the existence of a drain, and fixes its position as being in one corner of the presbytery. In the following century there is a definite direction by Pope Leo IV. (847-855) that a receptacle was to be provided near the altar for the disposal of the water which had been used in the ablutions of the hands and the chalice.

Several Norman piscinas exist, but no undoubted example of Pre-Conquest date. A shaft from North Stoke was shown at the Society of Antiquaries as a Pre-Conquest pillar piscina, but on inadequate evidence. The following piscinas, among others, are of Norman character: Ashe, Hants; Avington, Berks.; Bapchild, Kent; Barton-le-Street, Yorkshire; Cambridge, Jesus College; Caversfield, Oxon.; Clandon, Surrey; Coningsborough church and Castle chapel; Crowmarsh and South Leigh, Oxon.; Fritton, Suffolk; Gloucester cathedral crypt; Graveley, Herts.; Histon,

[1] For the above suggestions as to the use of the double piscina, acknowledgments are due to Rev. S. J. M. Price, D.D.

Cambridge; Horbling, Lincolnshire; Iford, Sussex; Keelby, Lincolnshire; Kilpeck, Hereford; Kirkstall abbey (7); Leicester



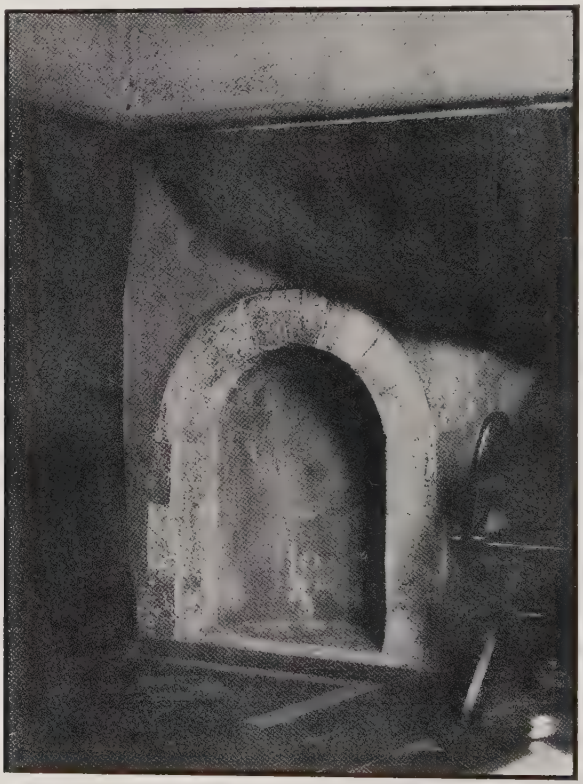
F. R. T.

Lincoln Minster

St Martin; Pytchley, Northants; Romsey abbey (2); Ryarsh, Kent; St Ives, Hunts; Scarcliffe, Derby; Stanton Fitzwarren, Wilts.; Stoke Poges, Bucks.; Tollerton, Notts.; Towersey, Bucks.; Winchfield, Hants; Winford, Dorset. Many plain

Norman piscinas no doubt were destroyed in later days to be replaced by examples in rich Gothic.

It is probable that in early days a piscina was not employed, but a basin ("bacile," "pelvis," "pelvicula"), the contents of which were afterwards emptied on consecrated ground.



M. P. P.

Monkton, Thanet

As early as the fourth century or earlier, and up to and at the present day, at the ordination of a subdeacon a *basin* and towel, "bacile cum manutergio," are delivered to him among the symbols of his office, to remind him that one of his functions is, as Durandus says, "pro lavandis ante altare manibus aquam præbere"; *i.e.*, "to offer the water for the celebrant to wash his hands before the altar." So also Durandus speaks of the

"pelves sive bacilia ad manus lavandas" that are got ready for a Pontifical Mass, and minutely describes how they are employed. It is possible that by the retention of the basin use we may explain recesses found where a piscina would be expected to occur, but which have no drain, *e.g.*, at Haydon

C. F. N.

Lanteglos-by-Fowey, Cornwall

church, Essex, and the old chancel of St Alban, Kemerton, Gloucester.

Sometimes the drain is contained in a bracket projecting from the wall, as at Ricall, Skelton, and Skipwith (153), Yorkshire; or there may be a recess in the wall as well as a bracket; *e.g.*, Bloxham, Oxon., and Christchurch (163), Hants.

Frequently the bracket takes the form of a capital and is supported by a small pillar. Good pillar piscinas are illustrated from Finchampstead, Berks. (152), and Bodmin, Cornwall; the drain of the latter is of a very elaborate character (145). An example in wood, very rare, is seen on the right in the Beauchamp chapel, Warwick (168). Both the pillar piscina and the bracket piscina are as a rule of early date; the reason for which may be that pillars and brackets without drains may have been in frequent use in early times to support basins. But by

W. M.

Finchampstead, Berkshire

far the most common form of piscina is a recess in the wall, the arch of which is ornamented with the mouldings or crockets and finials characteristic of the period, *e.g.*, Shepton Mallet, Somerset (157) and Ashby, Suffolk (155). At Dean, Hunts., and Ecton, Northants, the piscina appears to have had doors. In the finest examples the piscina is united with the sedilia in one design; *e.g.*, in the twelfth century at Hedingham, Essex (177), in the thirteenth century at Coulsdon (184), in the fourteenth century at Patrington (194), and rather later in Adderbury, Oxon. (202).

C. F. N. Skelton, Yorkshire

C. F. N. Riccall, Yorkshire

C. F. N. Skipwith, Yorkshire

The simplest of all forms is that which consists simply of a hollow or hollows cut out of the sill of a window, without any arch or canopy at all above; *e.g.*, Frenze, Norfolk, where there is a drain in each of the two south windows of the chancel. A local use, very common in some districts, *e.g.*, in East Suffolk, was to hollow a recess for a piscina out of the eastern jamb of a southern window, with two openings, one to the north, the other to the west, *e.g.*, Great Snoring, Norfolk, and Pettistree, Suffolk (169). A very unlikely place for a piscina is the sill of a diagonal squint in the respond of a chancel arch; this suggests the presence below, originally, of a lateral nave altar. Examples

P. B. B.

Blagdon, Somerset

occur at Crawley, Hants; Castle Rising, Norfolk; and Tilbrook, Beds (243). At Clapton-in-Gordano, Somerset, there is a piscina in a squint on the sacristy side of the wall between the sacristy and the chancel. In this sacristy there is an altar.

In some constitutions of the thirteenth century it was ordered that where there is no piscina, a hole in the floor to the south of the altar should serve the same end; it is likely that the drain mentioned by Bede (*supra*, p. 148) was a floor piscina. Examples survive in the Chapel of the Nine Altars, Fountains, and in Rievaulx and Furness abbeys; there is one in the north-west tower of Wells cathedral; others in St Catherine's chapel, Gloucester, and Carlisle cathedral. Others occur at Little Casterton, Rutland; Hevingham, Norfolk; Kirkham priory,

F. B.

Ashby, Suffolk

J. F. E.

Long Stanton, Cambs.

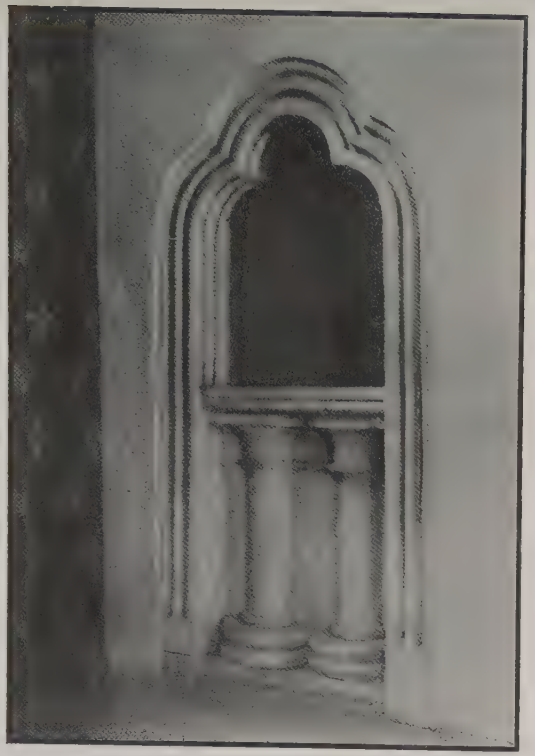
Yorkshire, and Langdon abbey, Kent. In Lincoln minster there is a floor drain in the morning chapel; in St Denis's chapel, in the central south transept, are *two* water drains in the floor. At Furness abbey the piscina was flanked by two tall recesses, with sloping bases; each recess had in the back a hole for an iron hook or rod to hang a towel from[1] (173). Where there is no drain but that in the pavement, as at Fountains, it must have been used in the ordinary way, to receive the rinsings both of the hands and chalice. But at Little Casterton, Rutland, and Hevingham, Norfolk, both floor and wall piscinas exist; in this case they may have been used like the ordinary double piscina. Or the use of the floor piscina may be referred to a curious ceremonial observance, instanced by Mr Micklethwaite[2] from Durandus; in which, just as an Italian waiter flicks off the oil to the ground from the neck of a flask of Chianti, so a little of the wine of the cruet was poured away before it was put in the chalice, partly to cleanse the spout or lip of the cruet, partly to eject any dust or other floating particles which might have settled on the surface of the wine in the cruet: "Sane sacerdos vel minister, missurus vinum et aquam in calicem, prius effundit modicum in terram . . . ut meatus sive locus vasis, per quem fluere debet, mundetur, et si quid est in superficie vini vel aquæ emittatur." At Barton Bendish, Norfolk, is a curious combination of a single piscina above and a double piscina on the floor; it appears to be fourteenth-century work (144). In the consistory court of Lincoln minster is a double piscina with covers to the basins.

The design of the stone bowl of the piscina varies much; sometimes it is semicircular, sometimes segmental, sometimes square; at Walpole St Andrew, Norfolk, there is a rose in the centre of the square; sometimes it has foils or flutings, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, ten, twelve or seventeen; a good example is seen at Bodmin (146). Some fourteenth-century piscinas have ball flower or a knot of foliage in the centre of the bowl, with orifices round it; in some a lion or dog, as in Wells cathedral. In Rochester cathedral is a T-shaped orifice.

The normal position of a piscina was in the wall to the south of an altar, and east of the sedilia, where they existed. But when the altar was placed before the east wall of a north aisle or chapel, the piscina had sometimes to be placed in the north or

[1] Hope's *Furness Abbey*, p. 23. Lyndwood says that there was always a towel at the piscina.—S. J. M. P.

[2] *Ornaments of the Rubric*, p. 43.



J. F. E.

Shepton Mallet, Somerset

G. G. B.

Trumpington, Cambs.

the east wall. Sometimes, even in an unaisled chancel, the piscina is found in the east wall, *e.g.*, at Ellesmere, Salop; and East Marden, Sussex; in the aisle of North Marston, Bucks., there are two piscinas in the east wall; in the chancel of Cudham, Kent, there are three piscinas in the east wall. More rarely they occur in the north wall. At Bamborough, Northumberland, there are thirteenth-century piscinas both in the north and the south wall; at Ditchling, Sussex, there is a thirteenth-century piscina in the north wall, and a fifteenth-century one in the south wall. Sometimes, but rarely, the piscina projects like a lip from the masonry of a minor altar. Sometimes a piscina may be seen high up near the spring of the eastern side of a chancel arch; this probably means that across the arch there was once a rood loft and on the platform of the loft an altar.[1]

Where there are two piscinas in a chancel wall, the probability is that the chancel has been lengthened, and that the western of the two piscinas is the earlier. Thus at St John's, Margate, there are two piscinas in the south wall of the chancel; that of the original short chancel being the western one.

In the Lady chapel of Grantham church is a curious piscina with a movable drawer of stone below it, the construction of which is shown in the drawing; the drawer is shown in three positions: pushed in, taken out, and half pushed in (147, 148).

At Long Wittenham, Berks., in front of the piscina is an effigy of a knight, only 26 in. long, and above the arch are angels hovering to receive the departing spirit; it may be that the knight commemorated by the effigy was the donor of the piscina. At Cherington, Warwick, is a piscina on the side of a tomb.

Many examples of monastic lavatories remain. It was a rule with the regulars to wash their hands before meals; and a lavatory was therefore provided in the cloister, either in a recess of the refectory wall near the refectory doorway, as at Kirkham priory, Peterborough and Cleeve, or opposite the refectory doorway, as at Gloucester, or in the centre of the cloister garth; the *Rites of Durham* describe a magnificent

[1] *E.g.*, Frome, Somerset; New Shoreham, Petworth, and South Harting, Sussex; Bilton, Chesterton, Brownsover, and Church Lawford, Warwick; Burghill, Ross, Wigmore, and Little Hereford, Herefordshire; Oddington and Deddington, Oxon.; Great Hallingbury, Essex; Horningsey, Cambridgeshire; Maxey, Northants; Tenby, Pembroke.

E K. P.

Exeter Cathedral: Lady Chapel

E. K. P.

St James's Chapel, Exeter Cathedral

lavatory in the form of a conduit in the centre of the cloister garth.[1]

At Selby is a well-preserved lavatory or sink in the vestry. At Lincoln is another adjoining the south aisle of the choir (149). In the north-east transept of Salisbury is a fine fifteenth-century lavatory with rich canopied work above it, removed thither by James Wyatt from some other part of the cathedral.

Norman piscinas may be plain, as at Monkton, Thanet (150), and Lanteglos-by-Fowey, Cornwall[2] (151); or may have the characteristic ornamentation of the period, as at Finchampstead (152). In the wall of the 1820 church at Blagdon, Somerset, there was found built in, a basin hollowed into a quatrefoil with a single central drain, and with archaic figure sculpture (154), At Skipwith, Yorkshire, is a piscina under a trefoiled arch with nailhead, and with foliated volutes of early type; probably belonging to the last years of the twelfth century (153). At Riccall, Yorkshire, is rather an earlier piscina, with trefoiled arch, nailhead, and scalloped corbel (153). At Skelton, Yorkshire, there is a pointed trefoiled arch under a pointed stringcourse; both have the tooth ornament; beneath the corbel is scrollwork of trefoil leaves; the work is *c.* 1250 (153). About the same date are the piscinas of Ashby and Bosham, with pointed trefoiled arch (166); Shepton Mallet, with round-headed trefoiled arch (157); and that of Long Stanton, which also appears at Jesus College, Cambridge (155), with intersecting semicircular arches; all three arches are delicately molded, and have molded capitals and bases with the water-holding or triple roll. Later is the example from Great Snoring, with cinquefoiled arch (169). The double piscina in the Lady chapel at Exeter (159) has two pointed and trifoliated arches set under a larger pointed arch, with the tympanum pierced with a sexfoil; this pointed arch is surmounted by a pedimental string with crockets of early type; it is part of the work of Bishop Bronescombe (1257-1280). The piscina at Trumpington is later (157). About the end of the century is the piscina in St James's chapel, Exeter cathedral, with naturalistic foliage (159). At Dersingham (161) and Pettistree (169), the ogee arch is employed, and the work probably belongs to the second quarter of the fourteenth century, as also the example from Norbury, Derbyshire (161). At Bloxham is a fifteenth-century piscina with four-centered

[1] Illustrated papers on *Monastic Lavatories* by Mr C. C. Hodges appeared in the *Reliquary* in 1892.

[2] This is possibly a stoup converted into a piscina. For list see p. 148.

C. F. N. Dersingham, Norfolk

F. H. C. Norbury, Derbyshire

arch. At Christchurch, Hants, is quite a delightful example from Prior Draper's chantry chapel, which is dated 1529 (163).

Pillar piscinas are illustrated from Finchampstead (152), Bosham (166), Yatton (167), and the Beauchamp chapel, Warwick, where it is of wood (168).

A curious example occurs at Wedmore, Somerset (171).

G. G. B.

Bloxham, Oxon.

H. E. M.

Christchurch, Hants

The Credence

The low Latin term "*credentia*" the Italian "*credenza*," and the French and English "*credence*" are originally applied to "a side table or sideboard on which vessels and dishes were placed ready for being served at table." Thus Jewell, in 1611, says: "While the Pope is sitting at the table, the noblest man within the Court shall be brought to the Pope's *credence* to give him water." Ecclesiologically it signifies "the small side table or the shelf on which the Eucharistic elements are placed previous to consecration." Thus Prynne, in 1646, says: "Lo here in this place and chapel you have a *credentia* or side table."

Several examples remain of domestic credences; *e.g.*, at Ockwells Manor; on these the meats were carved. Sometimes they had a locker for the remains of food, and were sometimes built up at the back in several stories; the superstructure being occupied by the cups and wine flagons; in this fully developed form they are known as "*court cupboards*."[1]

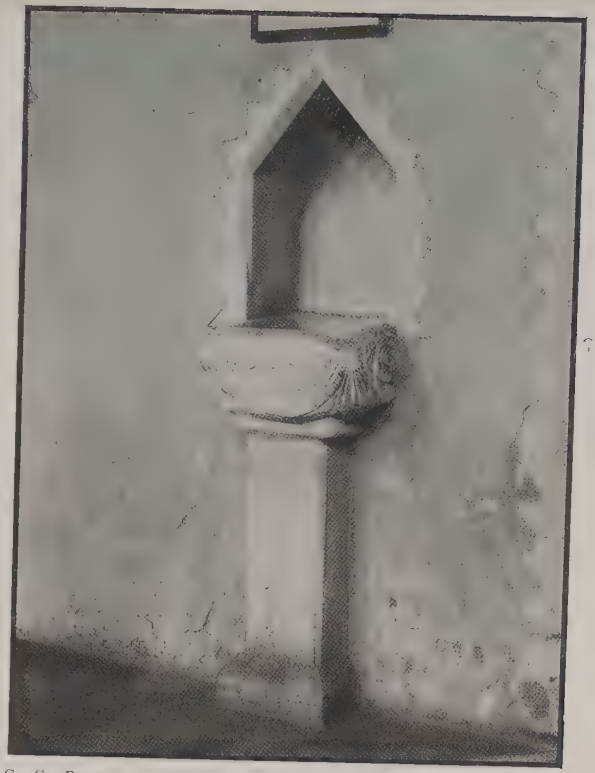
The derivation of the word is clearly from the Latin "*credere*." But it is a long cry from the Latin "*credere*" = "to trust or believe" to "*credentia*" = "a side table." The link is to be found in the precautions that used to be taken in order that a man might *trust* his meat and drink at table, and not only at table but at the altar too. For not even the wine in the chalice was always safe. Bower says that in 1055 "a subdeacon put poison into the chalice while Pope Victor II. celebrated Mass, and that he was only saved because, by a miracle, he was unable to lift up the chalice." Nor is it always safe now; in 1877 the Archbishop of Quito is said to have been poisoned by strychnine,[2] and there was another case in France in 1879, where many persons suffered from arsenic mingled with the sacred wafer by a confectioner. In the Pontifical of Pope Leo IV., who died in 1522, those who tested the elements are called "*credentiarii*." "Antequam acolythus illas (ampullas vini et aquæ) ad manus accipit, dat *credentiariis* ad pregustandum." Martene says that he had himself witnessed the same rite in the church of St Denis, when a bishop celebrated, in the solemn anniversaries of the Kings of France. To this day, at Pontifical

[1] Roe's *Old Oak Furniture*, p. 168.

[2] *Tablet*, 19th May 1879.

F. B.

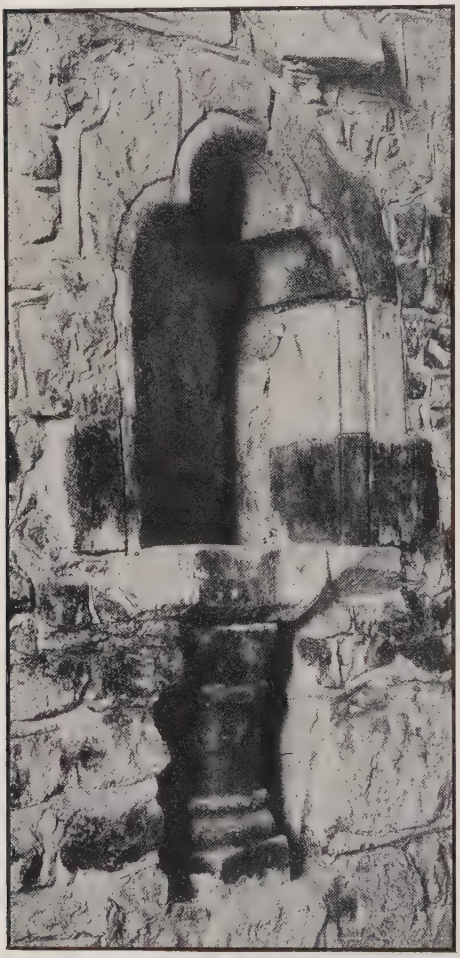
St Alban's Cathedral



G. G. B.

Castle Hedingham, Essex

Mass at St Peter's,[1] tables are placed in the presbytery, and the wine and water is first tasted by the pope's butler, and again by the principal taster, a bishop, by whom the Host and wine and water are tasted with his face turned towards the pope.[2]



F. S.

Bosham, Sussex

Therefore, both in the hall and in the church, it was desirable to have a tester or taster, or, as he is called in Italian, a "*credenziere*." This credenzer tasted the food and drink placed on a side table on the dais of the hall; and a side table similarly placed in the chancel of the church was also called a "credence," and was used for similar purposes. That this is the process by which the meaning of "credentia" has developed from "trust" to "side table" is clear from the words of J. Russell, who, writing in 1460, says: "Credence is vsed, and tastynge for drede of poysenynge"[3]

The credence is often said to have originated with the Greek Church, being the western equivalent of the *Prothesis* in a side chapel. Thus the credence would have been in use in the Western Church in very early days. As a matter of fact, however, the antiquity

[1] See *Pontifical Mass at St Peter's*, by Rev. Dr Baggs, Chamberlain of Honour to his Holiness. Paul Cullen, Censor. Rome, 1840.

[2] E. S. Foulke's *Church's Creed or Crown's Creed*, p. 58.

[3] *New Eng. Dictionary*, ii. 1154.

of the use of a credence table in the Western Church has been greatly exaggerated. The subject has been fully discussed in five papers in the *Ecclesiologist* (vols. vii. and viii.); in which, after a full discussion of the Papal Mass, the writer concludes: "We know not how our readers may be affected by his plain exposition of these ancient documents. The feeling which they raise in our mind is one of wonder how, with such records in existence, the prevalent notions with regard to the credence in the early Western Church could ever have obtained possession. We have the Eucharistic rites as celebrated in its most distinguished seat, in Rome itself, by the Bishop of Rome, with every circumstance of solemnity; and the credences can find no place. The office is complete without it; and if it were there, there is no purpose to which it could be applied." He agrees with Martene that the introduction of the credences arose out of the desuetude of the custom by which the elements were brought up to the altar as personal offerings by the faithful: "postquam a fidelibus in missa offerre desitum est."

F. S

Yatton, Somerset

"In England the ancient custom at plain services in the greater churches, and at most services in parish churches, seems to have been to place the chalice at the south end of the altar at the beginning of the service, and to take it thence to the middle of the altar at the

time of offering, thus making the end of the altar itself serve as a credence. At solemn services *cum tribus ministris* in quires" (*i.e.*, in cathedral, collegiate, and monastic churches) "the chalice was 'made' at a side altar or other fit place some distance away, so that by the stateliness of the approach greater dignity might be given to the ceremonial offering."[1] According to the Lincoln Cathedral Custom Book approved by Bishop Gravesend (1258-1279), after the Epistle had been read in the pulpit by the first of them, the two principal subdeacons brought the chalice and the

W. M.

Beauchamp Chapel, Warwick

corporas-cloth to the celebrant who, having "made "(or mixed) the chalice on the altar, presently carried it behind the altar in a seemly and convenient place ("portabit calicem retro altare aliquo loco ydoneo et decente"), while the second deacon spread the corporas (the principal deacon being busied with the gospel book). (See *Lincoln Black Book*, edited by Bradshaw and Wordsworth, p. 378.) As regards England, the only other documentary evidence—and that ambiguous—for the use of a credence table, refers to the use of Sarum, where there are mention both of

[1] J. T. Micklethwaite in *Ornaments of the Rubric*, p. 42.

W. M. Pettistree, Suffolk

C. F. N. Great Snoring, Norfolk

"locus ubi panis et aqua disponuntur" and "locus predictæ administrationis." The probability is that "the use of a distinct credence (or, as it is elsewhere called, '*ministerium* sive parva mensa, quæ est a latere epistolæ')—understanding thereby such a table, bracket, or recessed shelf as, besides the cruets, should allow the chalice to be prepared upon it as prescribed in the Sarum rubrics—was comparatively rare." And indeed Wheatley, writing in 1742, says (p. 272), "We have no side table authorised by our church." But though the documentary evidence is weak, there remain, or are said to remain, in England two or three credence tables in masonry. That at Fyfield, Berks., resembles a pillar piscina, except that it has no cup or drain; it might well have supported a statuette, or a lamp, or a basin, or an image of the patron saint; formerly it was in the north-east corner of the chancel. The only one which has the character of a table is that on the southern side of the high altar of St Cross, Winchester (172). Both these examples appear to be of the fifteenth century. A very interesting example of a Cistercian credence—not, however, a table—survives on the south side of the presbytery of Kirkstall abbey,[1] where it is placed west of the sedilia. It consists of a round-headed recess in the wall, about a yard across and a yard from the ground. In this recess the chalice was prepared, and from it the bread and wine were carried to be offered at the high altar. Above the arch is a hoodmold, which is chamfered; the portion on the right has been destroyed. The horizontal portion on the left, however, at some later period has had the chamfer cut away so as to form a flat ledge; moreover, above it a shallow niche has been formed in the wall with two small hollows. It can hardly be doubted that this was done to obtain a shelf for two cruets to stand on. A similar credence recess remains at Furness in the same position; it is oblong, is grooved for a shelf, and seems to have had a hinged door (173).

It is possible, however, that credence tables of *wood* were in use in the English churches before the Reformation. In France, at any rate, they were common, and were often very richly ornamented. A wooden credence table[2] is sculptured on one of the stalls of Amiens cathedral, *c.* 1522; and many fine examples survive in the Cluny and other museums. In England these wooden credence tables are said to have been introduced or reintroduced in Elizabeth's reign.[3] Canterbury cathedral was

[1] J. T. Micklethwaite in *Yorkshire Archæological Journal*, x. 554, and Hope's *Furness Abbey*, p. 24.

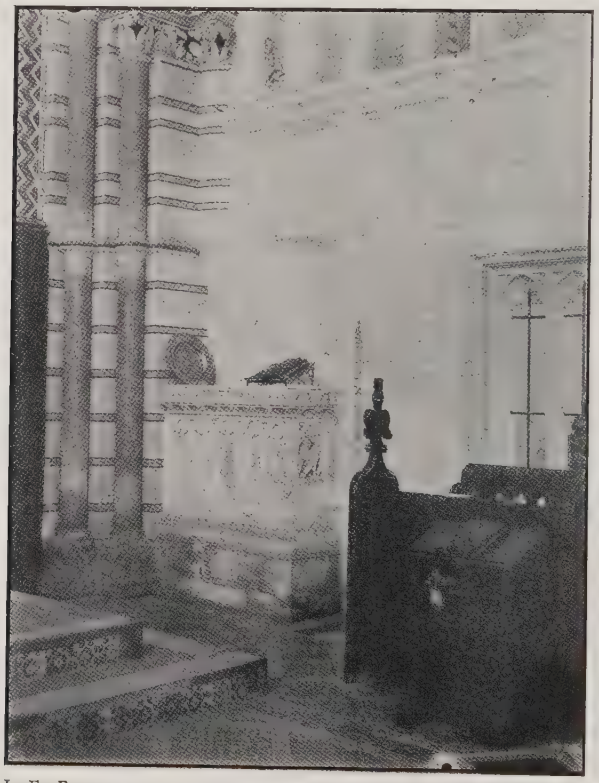
[2] Illustrated in Roe's *Coffers*, pp. 71 and 102.

[3] Neal's *History of the Puritans*, iii. 170.

F. R. P. S.

Wedmore, Somerset

provided (*c.* 1634), at the instrumentality of Archbishop Laud, with, among other things "a *Credentia*, or side table, with a Basin and Ewer on Napkins, and a Towel to wash before the Consecration."[1] One of the charges against Laud in 1641 was that he placed in his own chapel and the King's



J. F. E.

St Cross, Winchester

at Whitehall "a *credentia* or side table on which the elements were to be placed on a clean linen cloth before they were brought to the altar to be consecrated." Several examples of what are presumably wooden credence tables may be found; *e.g.*, at Manchester; St Michael's, Oxford; Battle, Queen-

[1] Neal's *History of the Puritans*, ii., c. v.; quoted in Legg and Hope's *Inventories*, p. 244.

borough, and Cobham. At Chipping Warden, Northants, is one of the time of James I., that at Islip, Oxon., is of the time of Charles II.

Nowaday credences in various forms are very common in the Catholic churches abroad. Usually ordinary wooden tables are employed. In Brittany, however, ancient credences of stone abound. In S. Sauveur, Dinan, there are 17 mural credences and 17 aumbries; at S. Malo, Dinan, 19 mural credences and 19 aumbries; they abound also at St Pol de Leon.

Furness Abbey

Though, as we have seen, the evidence is scanty for the existence of credence *tables* in our Pre-Reformation churches, yet credence *shelves* abound.[1] Usually they were so small that they cannot have supported more than the small cruets required at Mass. As a rule, a single small shelf was placed inside the piscina recess. Sometimes it is of stone; sometimes, as at Grosmont, Monmouth, it is of wood; sometimes the wooden

[3] Examples are illustrated from Skelton (153), Exeter cathedral (159), Stanford (174), Norbury (161), Dersingham (161), Trumpington (157), and Yatton (167).

shelf has disappeared, but the grooves for it remain. Exceptional arrangements occasionally occur. At Westhall, Suffolk; Winfarthing, Norfolk; Norbury, Derbyshire, and a chantry altar at Tewkesbury, there are two shelves, one perhaps for a towel. Sometimes the credence is not placed in the same niche as the piscina, but has a niche of its own above; *e.g.*, at Thorpe Arnold, Leicester. At Southwold there are two separate niches above the piscina. Sometimes room is left for the cruets on one side of the basin, as at Skelton, Yorkshire (153). In five of the ninety piscinas remaining in the diocese of Carlisle, room is provided for the cruets at the side of the piscina; viz., at Bolton, Irby old church, Longmarton, Newbiggin, and Ormside. Only at Millom is there a credence shelf.[1] At Litchfield, Hants, the stone shelf has three semicircular projections, as if for three cruets or vessels.[2] Sometimes there is a cruet niche on either side of the piscina niche, as at Kirk Hallam, Derbyshire.[3] Sometimes the shelf is not placed in a niche at all, but is a bracket or shelf projecting from the wall, as at Stoughton, Sussex, and Woodford, Northants;[4] at Thorpe Salvin, Yorkshire, the bracket is above the piscina.

W. M.

Stanford, Berks.

[1] Rev. W. Bower, *Piscinas in the Diocese of Carlisle*, 17 plates; *Cumberland and Westmorland A. and A. Society*, xii. 208.

[2] Illustrated by Cox and Harvey, *ibid.*, p. 63.

[3] Illustrated by Cox and Harvey, p. 66.

[4] Illustrated in Parker's *Glossary*, text, p. 148.

F. J.

Southwold, Suffolk

CHAPTER VII

THE SEDILIA

THE sedilia (plural of "sedile," "a seat") are the seats placed on the south or "Epistle" side of an altar. The object was to provide seats for the celebrant and others, while certain portions of the Mass were being sung by the choir; as in the following direction: "Quo finito, sacerdos cum suis ministris *in sedibus ad hoc paratis*[1] se recipiant, et expectent usque ad orationem dicendam, vel in alio tempore usque ad 'Gloria in excelsis.'"[2] More definitely it is stated in a Roman Missal, published at Antwerp in 1631, that the sedilia are to be occupied by the celebrant, deacon, and subdeacon while the choir sings the *Kyrie eleison*, *Gloria in excelsis*, and *Credo*. In 1552, the Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London states that there was a "pluckynge downe of the place for the prest, dekyne and subdekyne."[3]

It has been said that the sedilia are survivals of the seats of

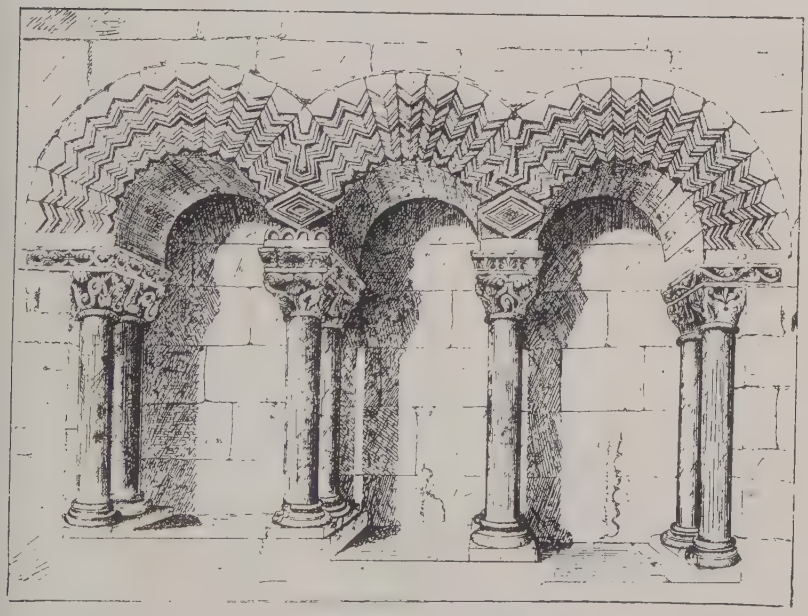
[1] The expression *sedes paratæ* may perhaps indicate that when the Sarum Customs were first drafted, in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, (1) either cloths or cushions were placed on the stone seats *if such then existed*, or (2) as seems more probable, there were as yet no sedilia, stools, or benches being set up for the principal ministrants. The word *sedile* seems to occur seldom, if ever, at this date. It may, however, be noticed in the Lincoln Cathedral Customs of Divine Worship, which are of the last quarter of the thirteenth century: *Liber Niger Lincoln*, p. 377—after the Grail, Alleluia and Sequence at Mass, "Eat (sacerdos) ad suum *sedile* et ibi dicat orationes." But even as late as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in some places most of the other worshippers present at a sung Mass ("interessentes missæ") had no seats provided for them, but were required to stand, when not bowing the knee, "nisi esset locus conveniens sedendi." See J. Burchard, *Ordo Missæ*, printed in 1502. J. W. Legg, *Tract on the Mass*, Henry Bradshaw Society, 1904, p. 134.—C. W.

[2] Frere, *Use of Sarum*, i. 66.

[3] Bloxam, ii. 90 and 91, and iii. 97.

F. R. T.

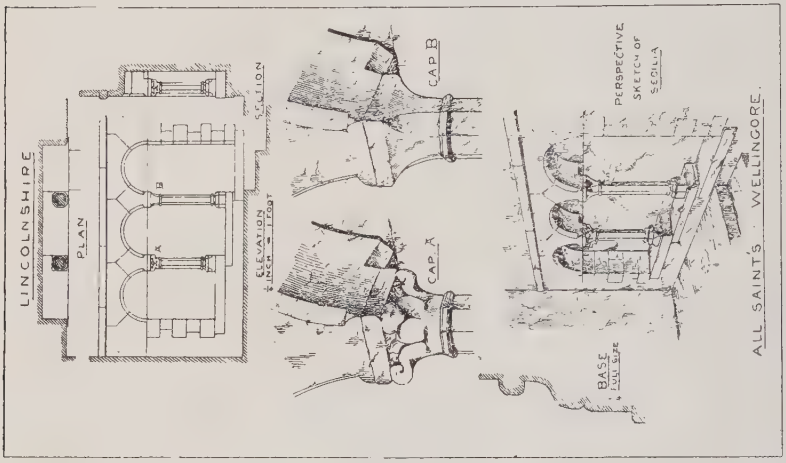
Hedingham, Essex



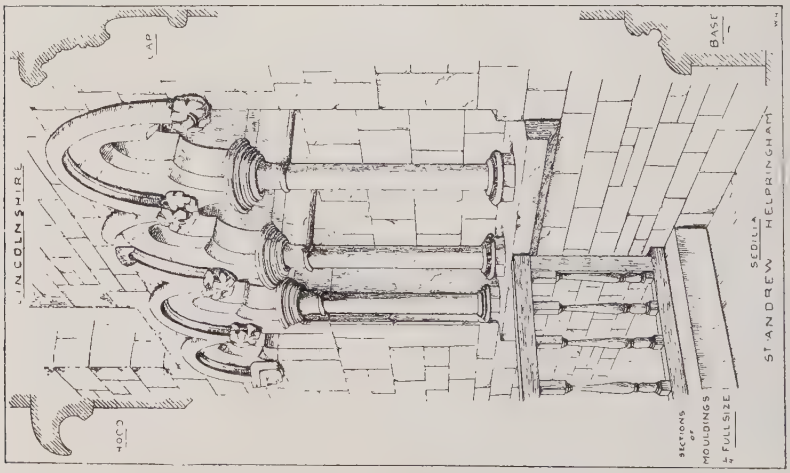
J. H.

Leicester St Mary's

the presbyters, which survive on either side of the bishop's chair at Torcello, Grado, Vaison, and elsewhere. In favour of this is the fact that the term "presbytery," which is usually applied to



E. S.



E. S.

the whole of the sacrarium, is sometimes restricted to the sedilia. Thus it is applied to the sedilia in the contract for rebuilding Catterick church, Yorkshire, in 1412: "The forsaide Richard

sall mak within the quere a high awter . . , with thre *Prismatories* covenably made be mason crafte with in the same quere," where "prismatories" is evidently a mistake for "presbyteries."

A few examples of Norman sedilia remain. At Castle Hedingham church, Essex (177), and at St Mary, Leicester (177), they are exceedingly rich, and must be quite late in the twelfth century. Other examples occur at Earl's Barton, Northants; Monyash, Derbyshire; Wellingore, Lincolnshire, and elsewhere (178).

In the thirteenth century sedilia became common. Perhaps the largest number belong to the fourteenth century, when the favourite objects on which art and expense were lavished were the sedilia, piscina, Easter sepulchre, and spire, just as a century later they were the choir screen, stalls, benches, roof, and porch.

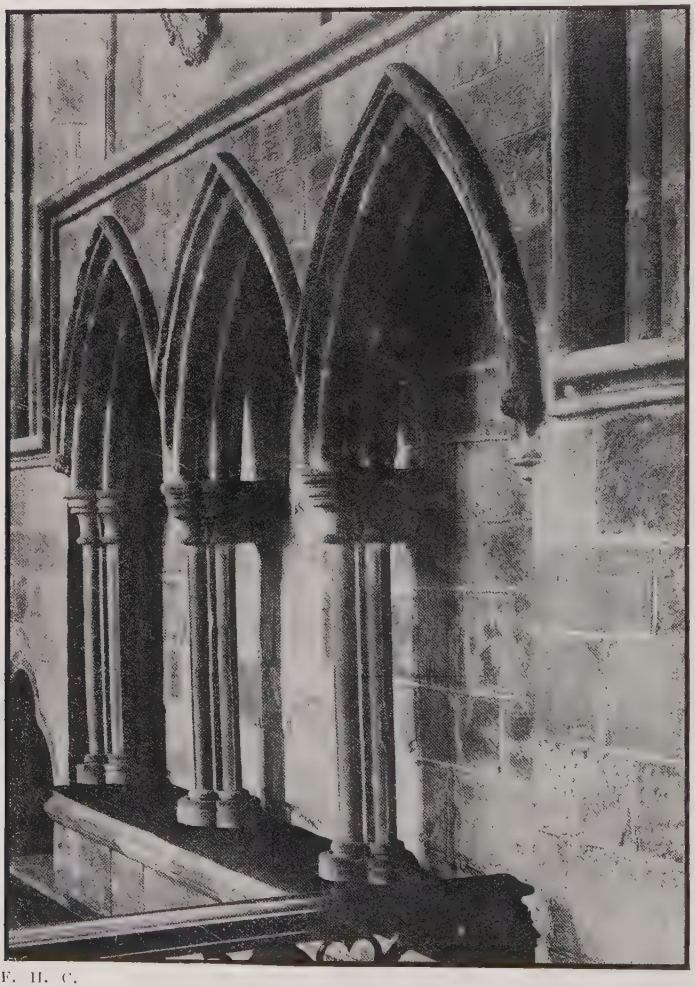
Where the sacrarium had an aisle or chapel to the south, its sedilia necessarily stood detached, and had to be ornamented at the back as well as in front; *e.g.*, at Beverley minster (195) and Milton abbey (179).[1] Otherwise they were built into the wall south-west of some altar. Their normal

F. H. C.

Milton Abbey, Dorset

[1] Also at Bristol and Exeter cathedrals; Crediton, Tewkesbury, and Westminster (197).

position was on the south side of the presbytery ; they are rarely found on the north side. At Helpston, Northants, however, on



F. H. C.

Ashbourne, Derbyshire

either side of the presbytery, there are three sedilia, and in Durham cathedral four.

Where there was an important altar elsewhere than in the chancel, there might be sedilia south of it. Sedilia occur in

the south aisle of Great Yarmouth; Harpley, Norfolk; St Mary, Leicester; and other churches in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, as also in that of the Mayor's chapel, Bristol. Sedilia also occur in transepts; *e.g.*, at Filey, Yorkshire, and Medbourne, Leicestershire.

Where there are separate seats, these are sometimes all on the same level, as at Ashbourne, Derbyshire (180); or they gradually descend to the west, as at St Mary, Leicester (177); or the two eastern are on the same level, and the third sedile lower, as at Uffington, Berks.; or the two western are on the same level, and the third sedile higher. In the thirteenth century they are usually graduated; in the fifteenth they are more often on the same level, as in Gloucester cathedral (200) and Chipping Campden (201). In England the celebrant occupied the easternmost, the most honourable position, as being nearest to the high altar, then came the deacon and the subdeacon. This is contrary to the directions of the 1631 Missal quoted above, which orders that at Mass the celebrant should sit on the "epistle" side of the altar *between* the deacon and subdeacon.

H. E. I.

Halsham, Yorkshire

The design of the sedilia naturally varied according to the prosperity and generosity of the parish. There are exceptions, however; in the richly decorated church of Bloxham the sedilia are merely plain stone benches. Sometimes the sedilia are merely projecting stone benches, with or without arms to mark the divisions, as at Chipstead, Surrey, or a mere hollow in the wall, as at Halsham, Yorkshire (181). Sometimes they consist simply of stone seats between the shafts of a wall arcade, as at Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire. Sometimes there is no division of seats; only one slab in a canopied recess, the canopy being semicircular, pointed,

segmental, or square; of this type fine examples remain at Buxted, Sussex, and Southwold, Suffolk (182). Cheapest of all were the sedilia obtained by merely lowering the sill of a window south of the altar; *e.g.*, Trunch, Norfolk.[1] At Goldington, Beds.; Little Wilbraham, Cambridgeshire; and

C. F. N.

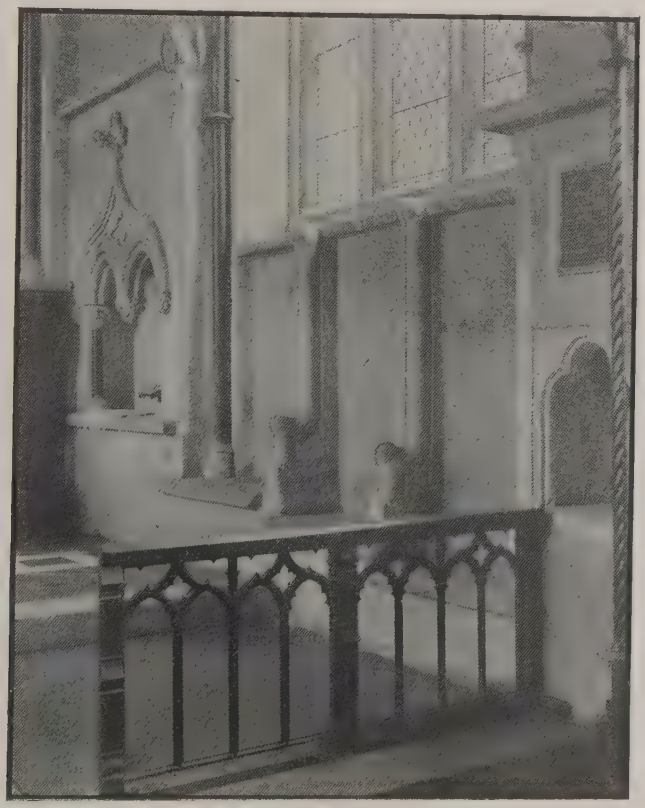
Southwold, Suffolk

Mildenhall, Suffolk (183), there are graduated sedilia in the window sills.

In the best designs the sedilia were united with the piscina in one composition, and each of the sedilia occupied a separate niche with its own arch or canopy; *e.g.*, at Dorchester abbey

[1] Add Brasted, Kent; Burrington and Dundry, Somerset.

church (199). In early work the tendency was to separate sedilia of this type merely by slender shafts; *e.g.*, Coulsdon (184), Stepney (184), Ashbourne (180), and even at Dorchester (199); in later work they were often divided by walls, which,



J. F. E.

Mildenhall, Suffolk

however, were often pierced; *e.g.*, at Hawton (187) and Chipping Campden (201).

In detail the design of the sedilia, as of the piscina, Easter sepulchre, wall arcading, screen, stall, brass, incised slab, and stained glass naturally follows that of the constructional members of the church, such as the arcades of the ground story and the triforium. Thus in the twelfth century the sedilia have semicircular arches, scalloped or Corinthian capitals, chevron,

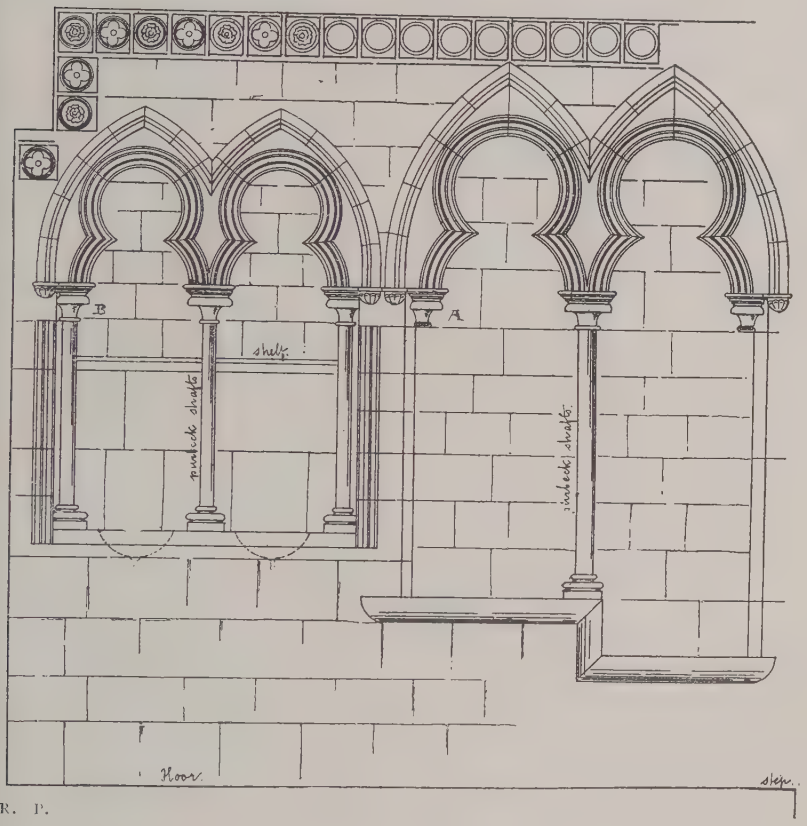
G. C. D.

Coulsdon, Surrey

F. R. T.

Stepney, East London

nailhead, or the like ornament, *e.g.*, Wellingore (178). In the first half of the thirteenth century the arches are delicately molded, as at Coulsdon, Surrey (184), and Stepney (184); sometimes the arches are pointed; sometimes the trefoiled arch is employed

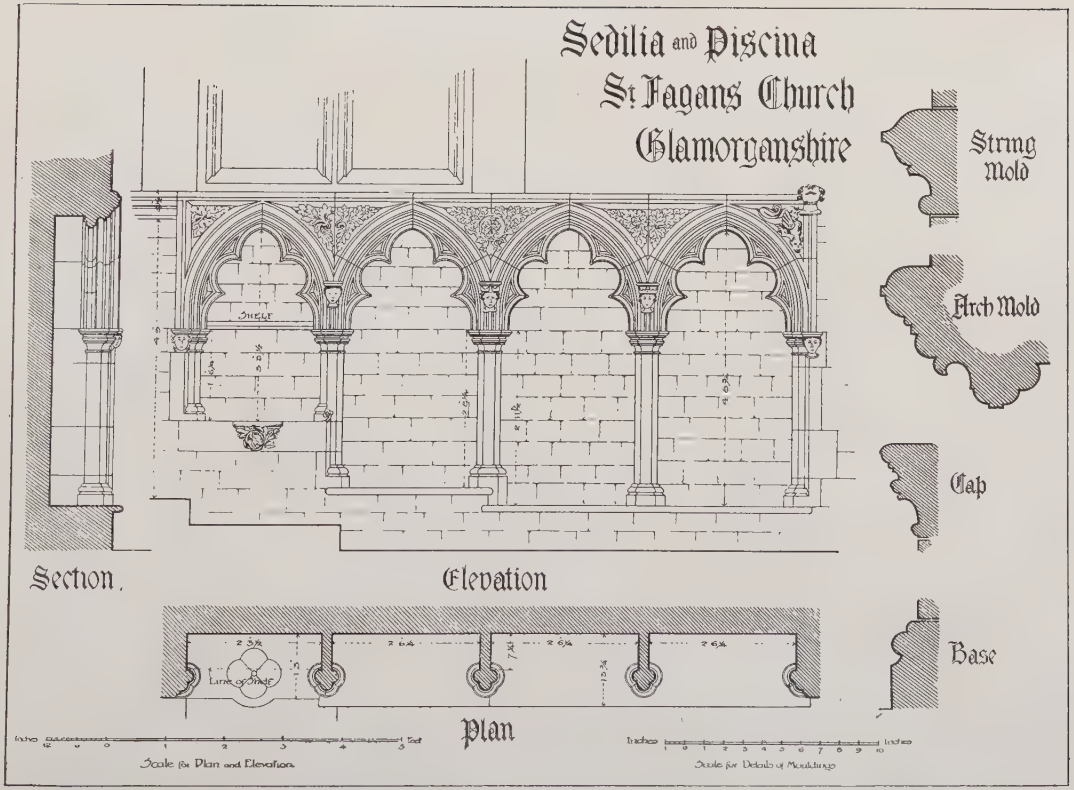


R. P.

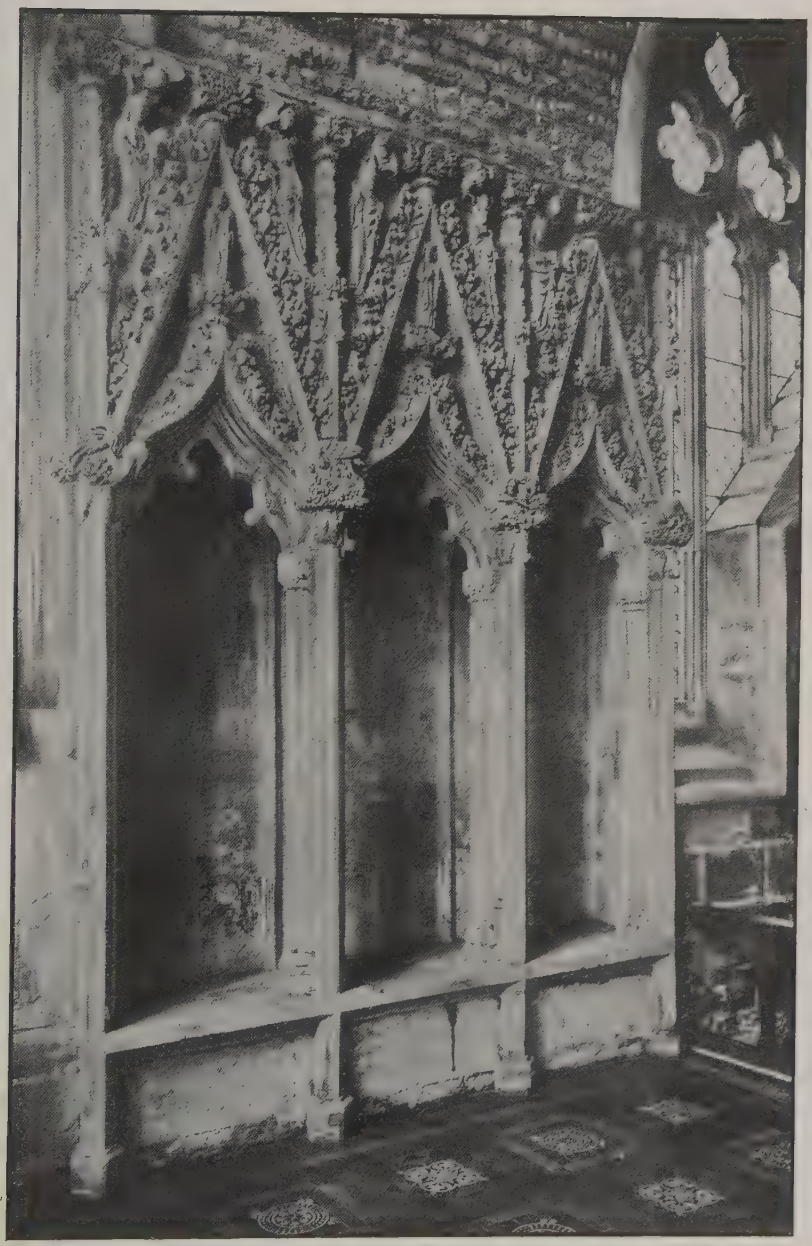
Hythe, Kent

as at Hythe, Rushden (191), Helpringham (178); the slender shafts have the water-holding or the triple roll base; the capitals are molded or have conventional stalked foliage.[1] Towards the end of the century crockets appear and a pedimental gable is common, and is still present in many designs of the first quarter of the fourteenth century. To the second half of this

[1] *Cf.* illustration of Staindrop in Billing's *County of Durham.*

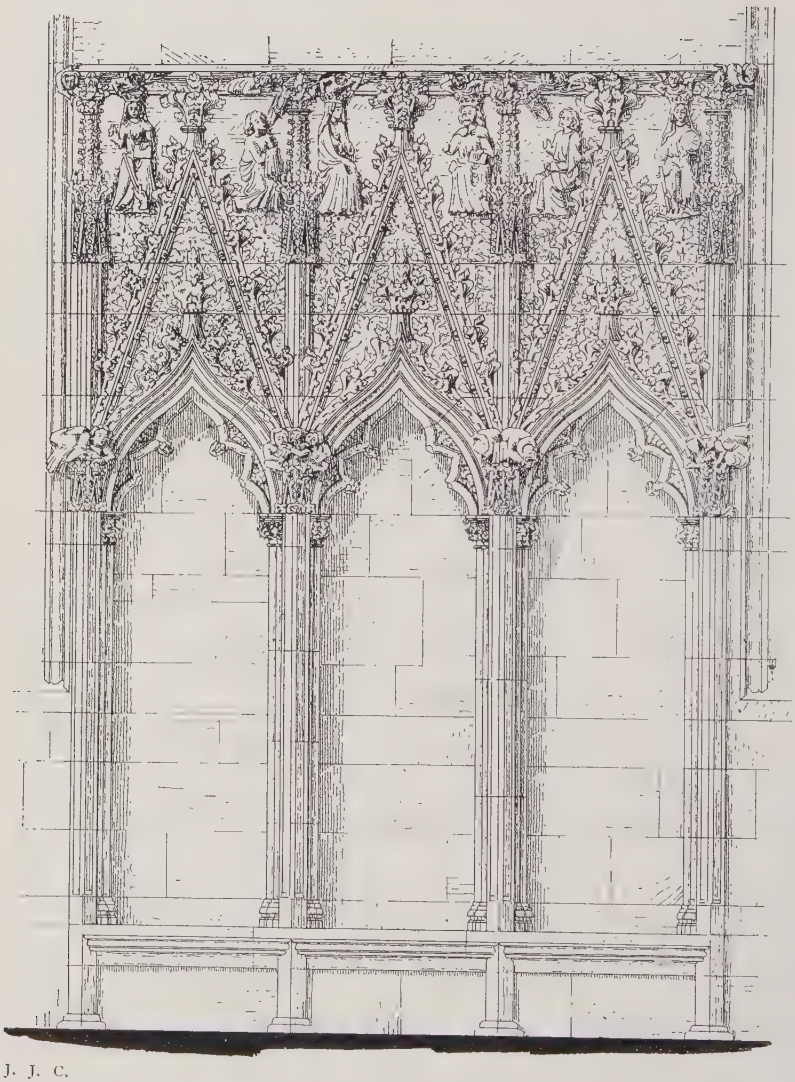

Sedilia and Piscina
St Fagans Church
Glamorganshire
String Mold
Arch Mold
Cap
Base
Section.
Elevation
Plan
Line of Splay
Scale for Plan and Elevation
Scale for Details of Mouldings

W. E.



H. B. P.

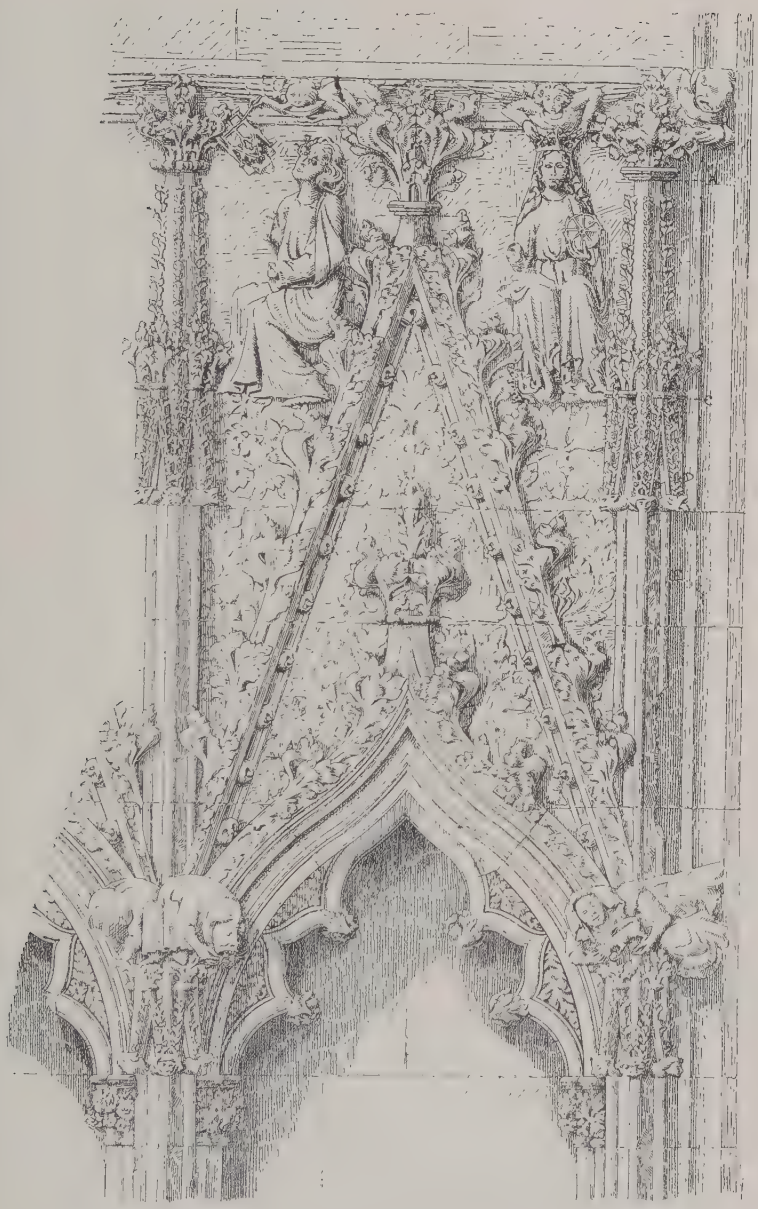
Hawton, Notts.



J. J. C.

Heckington, Lincolnshire

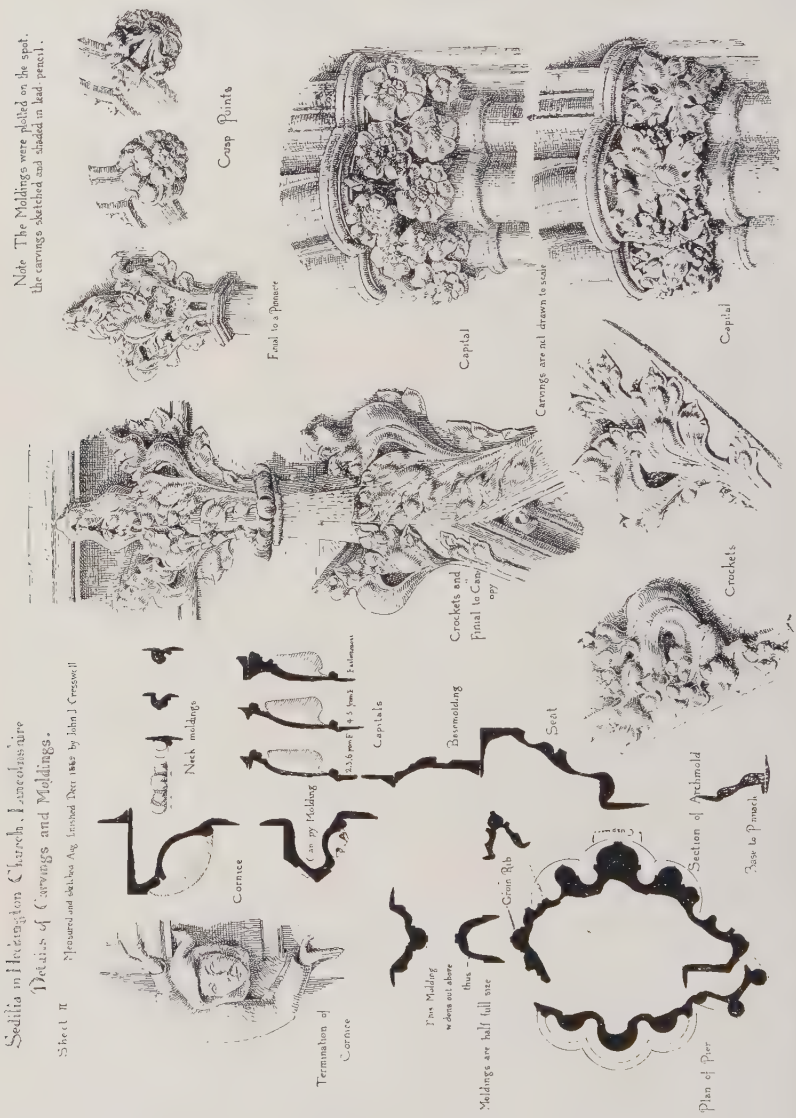
century belong very many rich and elaborate examples characterised by the excessive use of the ogee arch and complex cusping; such as St Fagan's, Glamorgan (186); Swavesey (192); Shalford, (193); Patrington, coarse but effective (194); those



J. J. C.

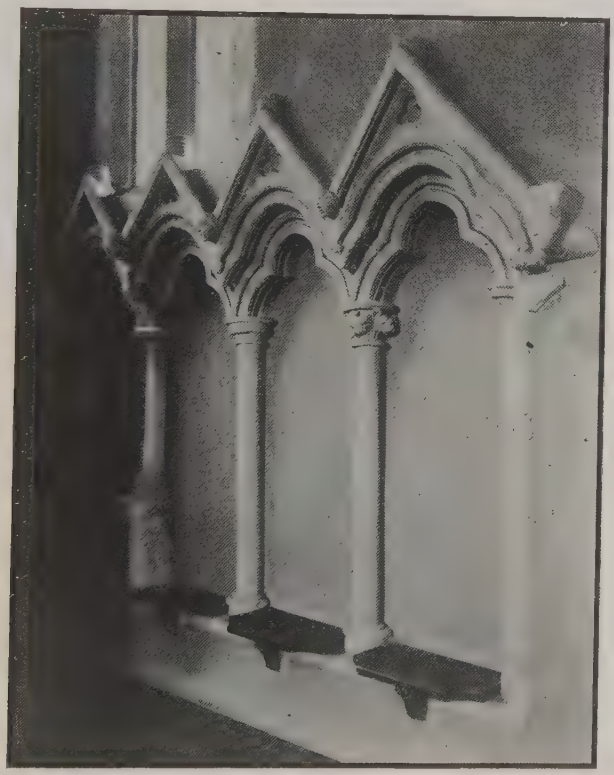
Heckington, Lincolnshire

of Southwell minster, which seem to have been removed to their present position after what had been the Lady chapel



was converted into a presbytery (193); those of Beverley minster, in oak, facing the great tomb of Lady Idonea Percy,

and similar in design to it (195); the spiry sedilia of Exeter cathedral (197), the work of Bishop Stapledon (1308-1326); those of Tewkesbury and Dorchester abbeys, the latter of which has an upper tier of small windows in which twelfth-century glass is inserted (198) and richest of all, those of Hawton, Notts. (187),



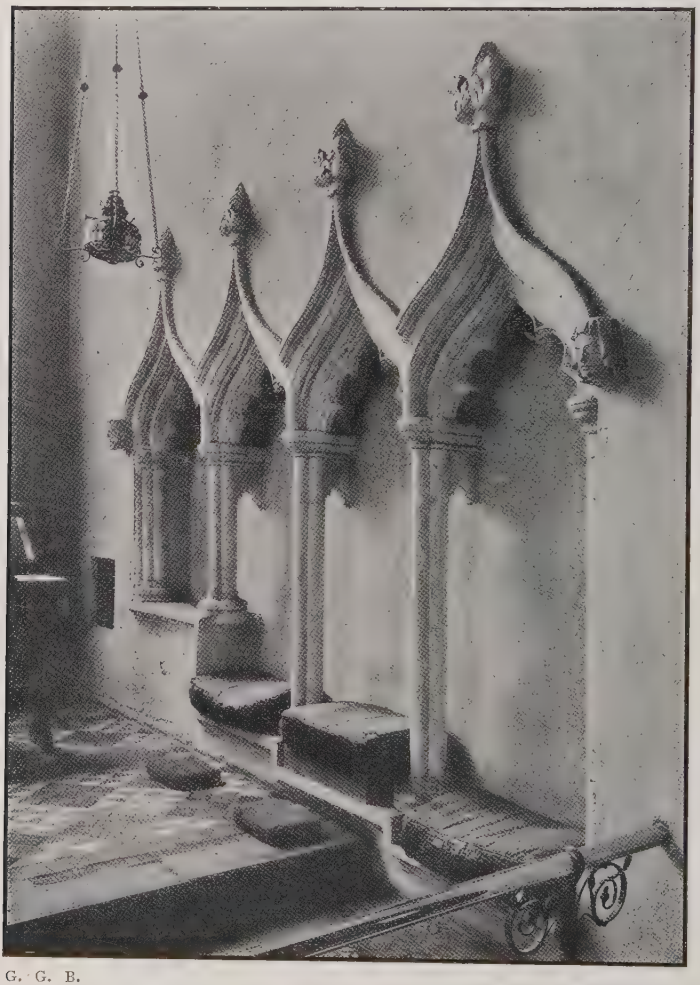
C. F. N.

Rushden, Northants

and Heckington, Lincs., by the same sculptors as the Easter sepulchres (188).[1] By the middle of the fourteenth century the churches had been so bounteously equipped with piscinæ and sedilia that examples are less numerous. Still reminiscent of the second quarter of the fourteenth century are the sedilia

[1] See also the rich example (destroyed) at Chatham, illustrated in *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. iii. See also 237 and 238.

of Chipping Campden (201), Adderbury (202), and Gloucester cathedral (the latter a fine design, very largely restored);



G. G. B.

Swavesey, Cambs.

both the last retain the ogee arch and complex cusping(200). At St David's (201), Gloucester cathedral, and Furness abbey the canopied sedilia show the influence of the tabernacled stalls.

F. R. T.

Shalford, Essex

E. L. G.

Southwell Minster

The normal number of sedilia is three, but there are many exceptions. Sometimes there is but one; *e.g.*, Avington, Berks.; Baltonsborough, Somerset; Barrow, Derbyshire; Beckley, Oxon.;

F. H. C.

Patrington, Yorkshire

Chaddesden, Derbyshire; Broadhempston, Devon; Ditchling, Sussex; Eaton Hastings, Berks.; Edlesborough, Bucks.; Lee, Bucks.; Lenham, Kent; Luccombe, Somerset; Queen Camel, Somerset; Spennithorne, Yorkshire; Wroughton, Bucks. Some-

times there are two sedilia; *e.g.*, Street, Somerset. Four sedilia occur at Beverley minster; Bolton priory; Bristol, Mayor's chapel Cotterstock and Denford, Northants; Furness abbey;

F. B.

Beverley Minster

Gloucester; Langley Marish, Bucks.; Luton, Beds.; Ottery Lady chapel; Paisley; Rothwell, Northants; Stratford-on-Avon; Turvey, Beds.; St Clement, Hastings; Westminster abbey. At Maidstone, Southwell, and Great Yarmouth there are five sedilia. Durham cathedral has four on either side of the

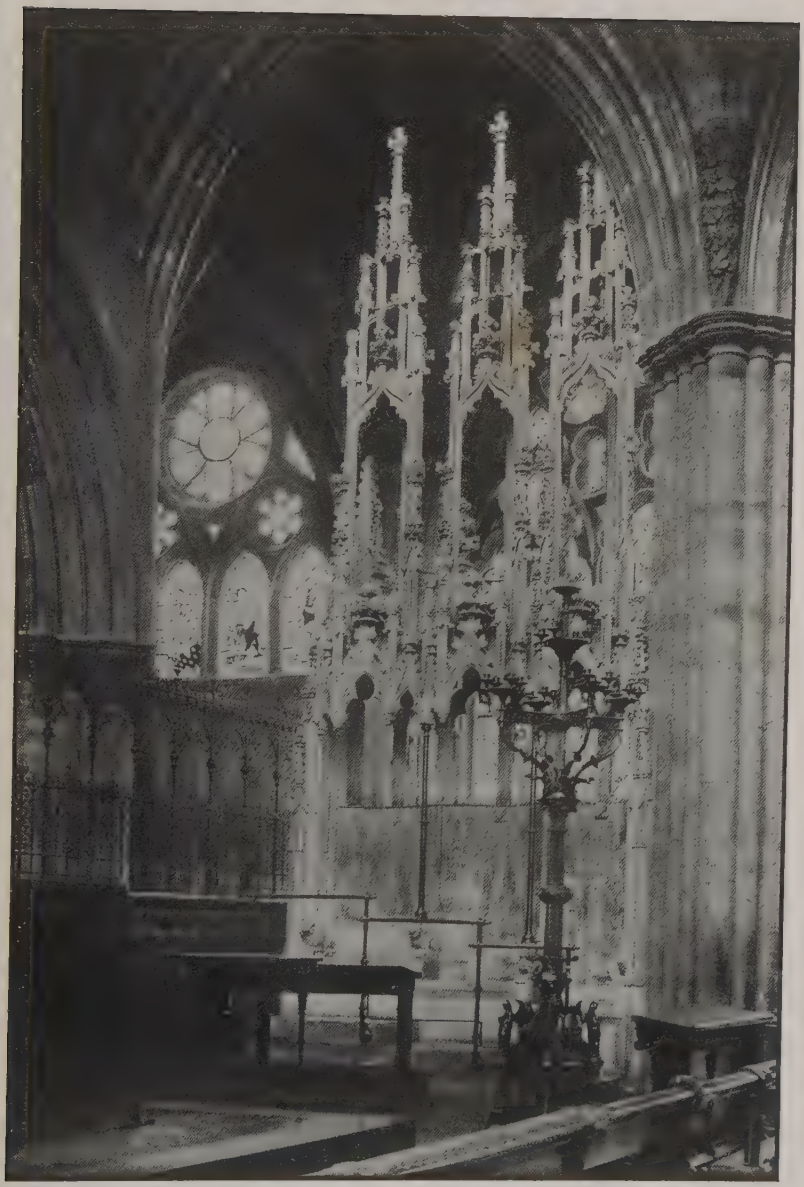
presbytery. It is possible that where there are more than three sedilia, the additional seats would be in use when the

F. H. C.

Beverley Minster

bishop was present and was celebrating Pontifical Mass, when extra accommodation would be needed for his chaplains and others.

Many sedilia have at the back rich diaper, which, as at



Exeter Cathedral

Tewkesbury, Dorchester, and Winchelsea, was picked out with gilding or colour.[1] At Westminster the sedilia, at the back, facing the aisle, had full length figures of St Peter, King Sebert, and the Confessor giving his ring to St John; in front were four figures.[2]

J. F. E.

Dorchester, Oxon.

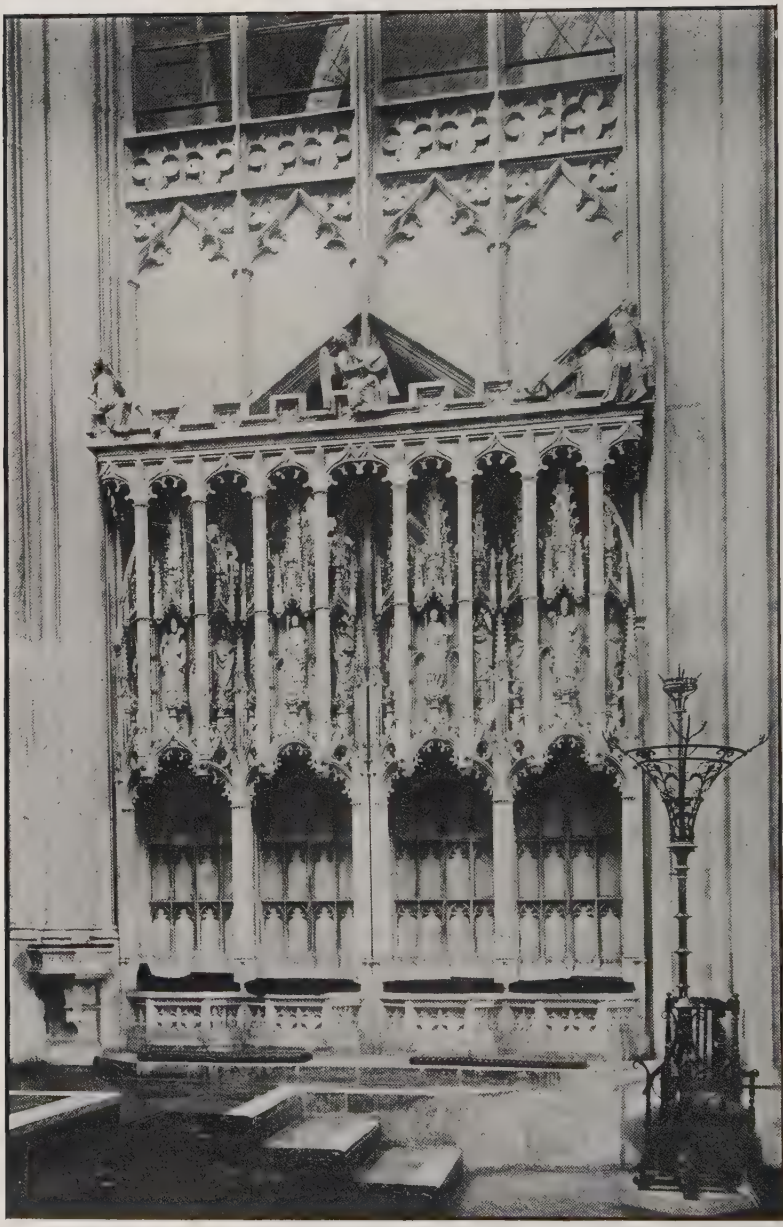
Wooden sedilia remain in Beverley minster, St David's cathedral (201), and in the parish churches of St Peter, Sheffield; Doddington, Upchurch; and Rodmersham, Kent (203). In poor parishes, no doubt, there would sometimes be no stone sedilia

[1] So also several piscinas; that in the rood loft at Frome retains its original illumination. Keyser's *List*, LIX. and 396.

[2] See illustrations in *Vetusta Monumenta*, 1780.

C. J. N.

Dorchester, Oxon.



W. T. A.

Gloucester Cathedral

G. G. B.

Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire

W. M. D.

St David's Cathedral

G. G. B.

Adderbury, Oxon.

at all; a wooden bench or chair being employed instead. It is quite possible that some of the massive mediæval chairs that have come down to us[1] were employed before the Reformation as sedilia. In St Oswald's church, Durham, on the south side of the chancel, is an oak bench with back, 4 ft. long internally, richly ornamented with Gothic tracery inside and at the west end, but with the east end plain; the inference is that originally it stood, as it stands now, with the east end towards the east wall of the chancel, and was intended to be used as sedilia, which purpose it still serves.[2]

P. M. J.

Rodmersham, Kent

On the Continent stone sedilia are exceptional; in France they hardly occur except in Normandy and Brittany. With cold stone seats, backs, and sides, they can neither have been comfortable nor safe to sit in long.[3] The following Continental examples, among others, may be mentioned of stone sedilia: in the cathedrals of Augsburg and Ratisbon, Frankfurt-on-Main; the cathedrals of Milan, St Mark's, Venice, Padua, Pavia; also the Certosa near Pavia, Torcello; S. Stefano, Verona; and Burs and Lye in Gothland.[4] That at Lye is of marble.

[1] See the writer's volume on *Stalls, Tabernacle Work, Bishops' Thrones and Chancel Chairs.*

[2] Acknowledgments are due to Rev. J. T. Fowler, D.C.L., for rubbings of details and measurements of this bench.

[3] At Kirkstall there is clear evidence that the sedilia originally consisted of a recess containing a stone bench. Later on the bench was cut away, and the recess lined with wood for wooden seats (Hope's *Kirkstall*, p. 11).

[4] Illustrated in Maryatt's *One Year in Sweden*, 1862.

CHAPTER VIII

THE AUMBRY AND THE SACRAMENT HOUSE

THE aumbry, locker, hutch, or *ministerium* is a cupboard in the wall near an altar. The terms are also used of wooden cupboards or presses standing free, such as that in Wensley church, Yorkshire. The word has gone through many changes. From the Latin "*armarium*," a cupboard or chest, it was altered into "almarium" by dissimilation (*cf.* "pe*r*eg*r*inus," "pe*l*eg*r*in," "pi*l*g*r*im"); from this came "almary," "almery," "aumery," "aumry," "aumbry" (*cf.* "nu*mer*us," "num*ber*"), "ambry." Some of the latter forms are still in domestic use in Scotland and the North of England.[1]

C. F. N.

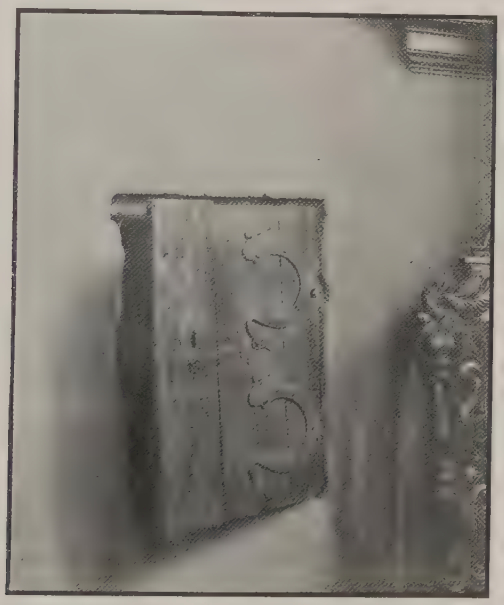
Minster, Thanet

As a rule, the aumbry is simply a square or oblong recess; its design in nowise attempting to compete with the richness of piscina, sedilia, or Easter sepulchre; *e.g.*, Rushden (213) and Lincoln (213). On the other hand, in compensation, its door was sometimes of ornamental character; at Minster, Kent, the aumbry has an original door with linen pattern (204); and sometimes it was strengthened with the iron

[1] The terms were often imagined to be corruptions of "almonry," and so were applied to any place where alms were distributed; *e.g.*, the "almonry" or "ambry" at Westminster abbey (*New English Dictionary*, i. 273).

scroll-work of the period, as at Rothersthorpe, Northants (205). Sometimes the ornamentation went further still. It has been noted[1] that several churches in the island of Gothland in the Baltic retain aumbries in which the doors are surrounded by a wooden frame of more or less ornamental character, and that the plug holes of such a frame or casing occur not infrequently in English churches; *e.g.*, at Upton Grey, Hants.

Occasionally exceptions occur to the normal unmolded



W. M.

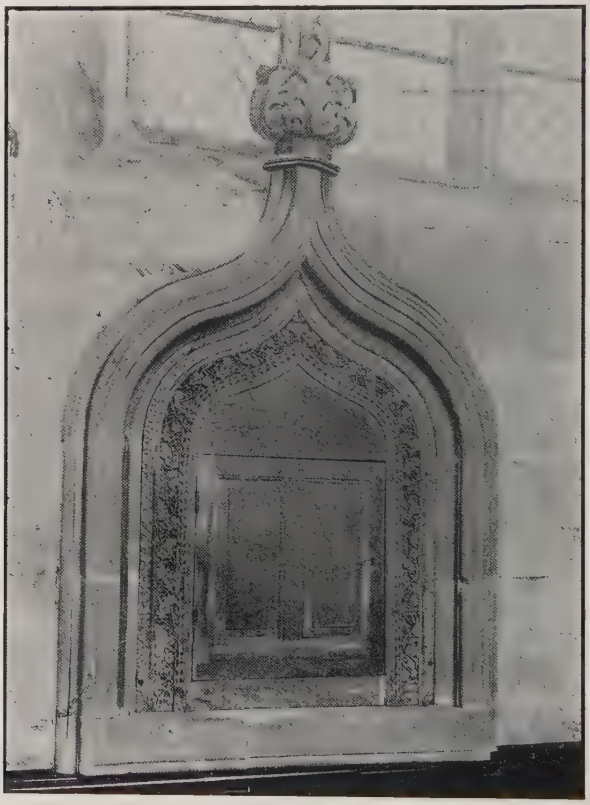
Rothersthorpe, Northants

square or oblong recess; though this was naturally preferred, as simplifying the construction of the door. This would evidently be more difficult of execution when the recess was, as sometimes happened, lancet or trefoil headed; or, as at Salisbury, triangular-headed; or, as at Sefton, of ogee form. Where the last form was adopted, it was usual to leave the recess still rectangular; *e.g.*, Sefton (206).

Originally, very few of the parochial churches had sacristies; an early example is the sacristy of the town church of Hemel

[1] Cox and Harvey, p. 316.

Hempstead, with twelfth-century vaulting. The priest vested at the altar, and his vestments were usually stored away in the church chest, while the vessels used at the altar and font were kept in the aumbries. Thus the chest and aumbry are the equivalent of the later vestry. The intent of the aumbries



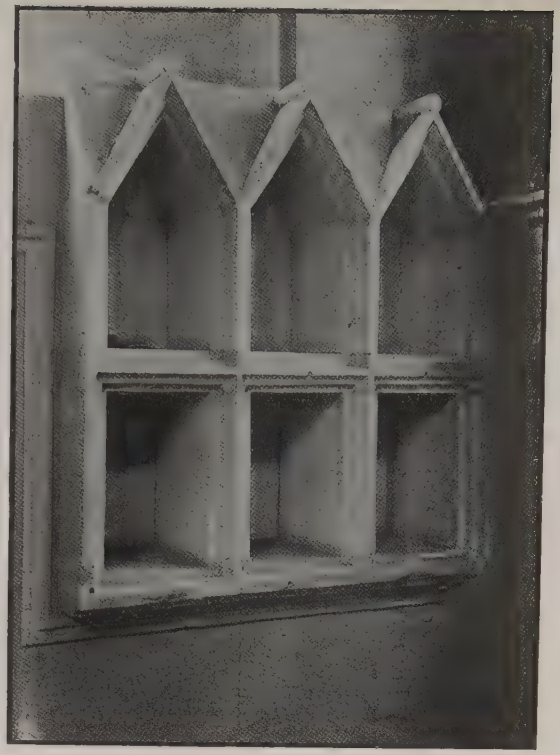
G. G. B.

Sefton, Lancashire

remained the same in quite late times. The Council of Aquileia ordered that "in dictis fenestellis bene munitis serventur olea sacra in vasculis argenteis sub sera firma et clavis." At Durham every altar had "severall aumbrie and some two." The use of some of these is precisely specified. "In the north side of the quire there is an Almerye, near to the High Altar, fastened in the wall, for to lay anything pertaining

G. H. L.

Salisbury Cathedral



J. F. E.

Langford, Oxon.

to the High Altar. Likewise there is another Almerye in the south wall of the quire, nigh the High Altar, enclosed in the wall, to set the chalices, the basons and the crewetts in . . . with locks and keys for the said Almeryes."[1] So also "in the wainscott, at the south end of the (nave or Jesus) Alter there was iiij faire Almeries, for to locke the chalices and sylver crewetts, with two or thre sewts of Vestments and other ornaments, belonging to the said altar for the holie daies and principall daies."

Some aumbries were used as receptacles for reliquaries. In

C. F. N.

Great Walsingham, Norfolk

Lincoln minster there was "a Tabernacle with two leaves all of wood, containing a relique of St Thomas of Cantilupe, sometime Bishop of Hereford."[2] It may be doubted, however, whether this was not rather a diptych.

In 1492 there is an entry in the churchwardens' accounts "for making the door of the *almery* that we lay our deeds and indentures in." Therefore another use of an aumbry was as a safe in which to keep valuable documents, not only those of the church, but those deposited for safety by parishioners.

[1] *Rites of Durham*, pp. 82, 28, 2.

[2] Dugdale's *Monasticon*.

C. F. N. Trunch, Norfolk

C. F. N. Salisbury Cathedral

Across the aumbry is frequently a stone shelf. Also a few original shelves of wood survive. Where the wooden shelf has disappeared, its former presence may be shown by the grooves on either side, and at the back of the recess, as at Rattlesden, Suffolk. A fair number of original doors survive also.[1] Where the door has disappeared, the pivots of the hinges sometimes

C. F. N.

Blakeney, Norfolk

remain; as at Rattlesden, Suffolk. At Swine, Yorkshire, the wooden framework is complete, but the door has disappeared.

At Twywell, Northants, is a curious combination of gospel

[1] *E.g.*, Aston, Collingtree, Kingsthorpe, Great Walsingham, Norfolk; Floore, Ringstead, and Rothersthorpe, Northants; Barrington, Cambridgeshire; Richmond, Yorkshire; Sefton, Lancashire; Chaddesden, Derbyshire; Minster, Kent (204): and Salisbury cathedral (207).

desk[1] and aumbries on the north side of the chancel; below is a recess, possibly for the Easter sepulchre (226). At Stanford in the Vale, Berks., there are piscina, credence shelf, and aumbry (174). At Trunch, Norfolk, is a piscina below; the door of the aumbry above is gone, but traces of its hinges remain (209). In Salisbury cathedral is a piscina with credence shelf above, and two aumbries on the right (209); also two tiers of aumbries with the original doors (207). At Langford, Oxon., are three aumbries with three more superposed (207). Occasionally, too, an aumbry is found worked into a window sill, as at Pulborough, Sussex, and Wedmore, Somerset (171); or into an angle of the chancel, as at Little Bytham, Lincolnshire.

The south side of the chancel being occupied with the piscina and credence, sedilia, and priest's doorway, the normal position of the aumbry was on the north side. But where the altar was at the east end of the south aisle, the aumbry attached to it would have to be in the south wall of the aisle. In fact, wherever there was an altar, both piscina and aumbry were simply placed in the most convenient position that could be found. An aumbry also occurs in the west wall of the nave or somewhere near the font; in this case it may have served to enclose the chrismatory used at baptism, which, however, was usually kept in an aumbry in the sacristy or the chancel. Sometimes the western bays of the nave aisles were screened off as chapels; *e.g.*, at Addlethorpe, Lincolnshire; and aumbries and piscinas would be required in the neighbourhood of the altar of each chapel. Sometimes there are two or more aumbries in the neighbourhood of the high altar.[2] Occasionally there is an aumbry or aumbries in the east wall of the chancel.

It has been urged that an eastern aumbry must have been a Sacrament House for the Reservation. This may be so, but we must here make an important distinction. The holy sacrament is nowadays reserved for two purposes. One is for the purpose of exposition and worship; so much so that a Roman Catholic thinks and speaks of a church as the "Home of the Blessed Sacrament." This usage took the form of adoration of the Host contained in a monstrance or *ostentorium*, or within a shrine, or inside an image in the procession on Palm Sunday and early on Easter Sunday and on Corpus Christi

[1] For gospel desks, see Dr Cox's *Pulpits and Lecterns*, p. 181.

[2] *E.g.*, at Hythe, Kent; Clymping and Sompting, Sussex. At Blakeney, Norfolk, there is a pair of aumbries in the east wall on either side of the altar (210).

Day.[1] There was, however, a much more common English usage; viz., the sacrament was a viaticum, which might be taken at need to the sick and those *in extremis*; this is shown by the numerous references to bell, book, candle, and canopy in churchwardens' accounts and mediæval wills. Certainly the sacrament was reserved for this purpose in a mediæval church. But where? Surely, one would assume, in some very conspicuous and impressive situation. This in the English churches varied.

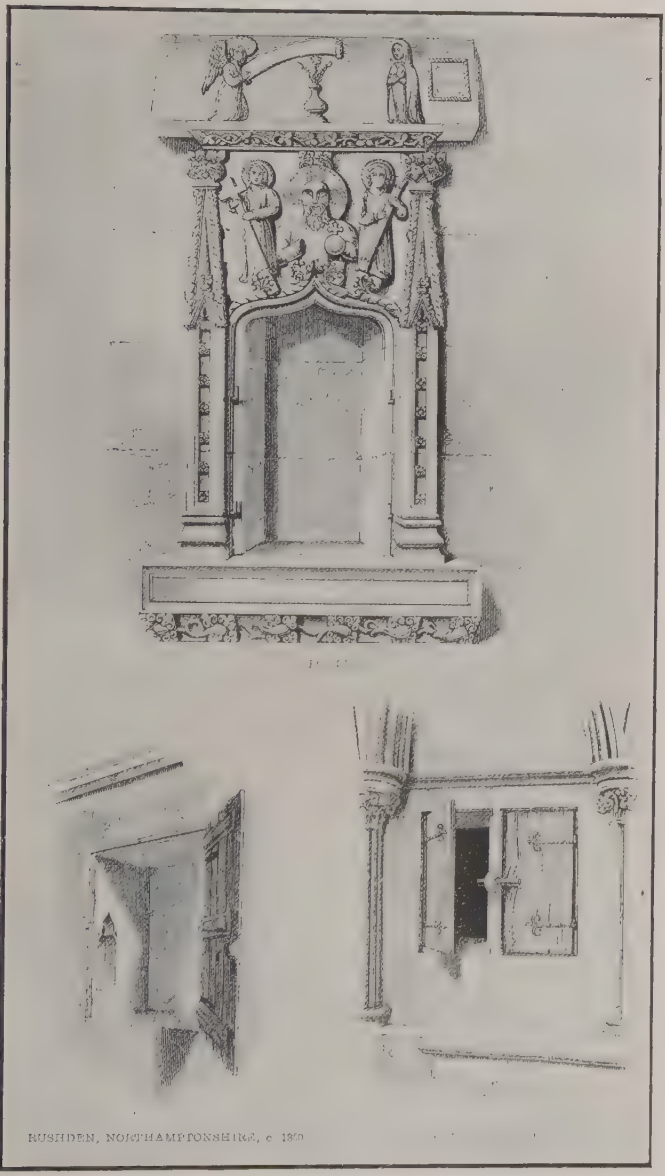
The normal English use undoubtedly was to reserve it in a pyx suspended in front of and above the altar, as it is shown in the Islip Roll. A second method, far rarer, but undoubted and ancient, was to enclose it in a small coffer and to place the coffer on the altar. Thus at St Stephen, Colman Street, London, in 1466, there is mention of "j coffyr for *to keep the Sacrament on the hygh auter*," and in 1547 at St Margaret, Westminster, 1s. 4d. was paid for making "a little coffer upon the hie altar *for to set in the sacrament*." In the abbey church of Peterborough there was "in the quire the High altar plated with silver, well gilt, with one image of Christ's Passion, and a little shrine of copper, enamelled, *for the Sacrament*."[2] In early days the coffer frequently had assumed the form of a tower. At Rheims, S. Remigius left directions in his will for a vase or tabernacle to be made, in the form of a tower, out of a gold vessel weighing 10 marks. St Felix, Archbishop of Bourges, was commended (*c.* 1573) for having made a tower of gold, exceedingly precious, to contain the Sacred Body of Our Lord.[3] In the chapel of King's College, Aberdeen, set out in 1542, it appears that "on the altar of St Michael there was a place on the altar for the sacrament *of pyramidal form*." This can hardly refer to an aumbry. Evidently the use as to reservation was not always uniform, at times not even in the same church: for in the collegiate church of St Julien de Tours, the sacrament reserved for the canons was kept in a "suspensio," *i.e.*, a suspended pyx, while the viaticum was reserved in an "aumbry."[4] But a loose

[1] What is now a matter of common occurrence in Catholic churches on the Continent, the Exposition of the Sacrament in church, was unknown in England before the Reformation, nor was it introduced on the Continent till the sixteenth century.—S. J. M. P.

[2] Gunton's *Peterborough*, p. 61.

[3] Thiers, *Sur les Autels*, p. 197.

[4] "In 1547, eight tabernacles were sold out of the church of St Mary Magdalene, Oxford, which were for the most part over the altars"; this has been taken to imply that some, at any rate, of these tabernacles were permanently fixed on the altars: but they have been merely canopies of tabernacle work over statues resting on brackets near the altars or forming part of a reredos.



RUSHDEN, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, c 1300

J. H. P.

coffer on the altar slab must have been very insecure. The next step was to build upon, or as part of the altar, a substantial erection—the modern "tabernacle," containing a little cupboard with lock and key; which is what one sees nowadays on almost every Catholic altar here and abroad.[1]

But there was a third method, by no means uncommon, viz., to reserve the sacrament simply in a cupboard or aumbry, constructed in the wall and provided with door, lock, and key. In 1457 the Bishop of Grenoble ordered the reserved sacrament in his diocese to be henceforth kept in an aumbry, to be formed in the right-hand[2] wall of the apse; it was to be lined inside with wood, and to have a solid door made to fasten with a key. It may be, and has been urged, that almost every aumbry we possess in the chancel walls—north, south, and east—is of such plain and unornamented character that it is hardly credible that it can have been employed for so august a function as the reservation of the sacrament. But in the cathedral of Verona, in the second or third decade of the sixteenth century, the blessed sacrament was reserved *in quodam angulo*, which has been not unfairly translated "in an out-of-the-way corner"; and Bishop Ghiberti was so dissatisfied with the arrangement that he substituted for the locker a vast suspended tabernacle of marble and crystal borne by four brass angels.[3] Be that as it may, there is at any rate a certain amount of documentary evidence for the use of the aumbry in English churches for the reserved sacrament. The accounts of Thame church, Oxon., mention "an aumbreye *for the Lorde's Boddye*." And there is a definite statement in Waterman's translation of the *Fardle of Facions* (A.D. 1555) recommending wall aumbries for the reserved sacrament: "Upon the right hande of the highe aulter, there should be an almorie either cut into the wall or framed upon it, in the whiche thei would have *the sacrament of the Lorde's Bodye*; the Holy Oyle for the sicke, and chrismatorie, alwai to be locked."

But while there is no reason to believe that there was any widespread use in England of the aumbry for reservation, its employment in Scotland is beyond doubt. At Deskford the very inscription on it speaks of "This present loveable mark

[1] This did not prevail in England except possibly during the Marian period.—S. J. M. P.

[2] Probably this means, as in the *Fardle of Facions*, the dexter or north side.

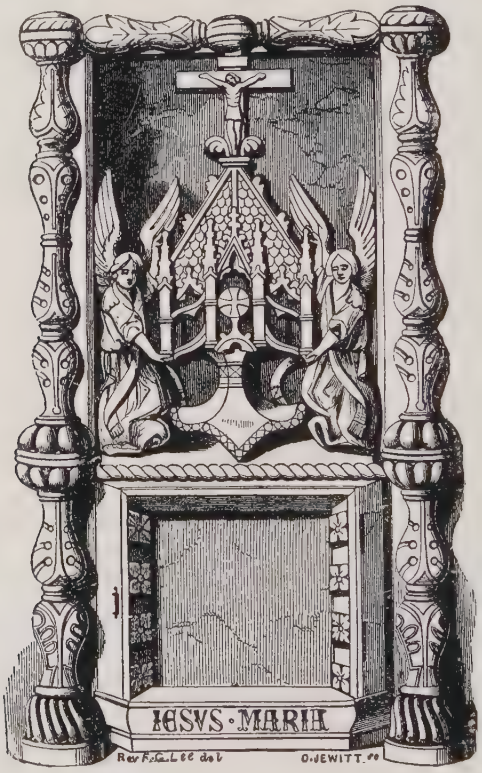
[3] Edward Bishop on "*The History of the Christian Altar*" in the *Downside Review*, July 1905.

of *Sacrament house* made to the honour and loving of God by a noble man, Alexander Ogilvy of that ilk, and Elizabeth Gordon, his spouse, the year of God, 1551." At St Machar's church in Old Aberdeen there is mentioned in 1599, "the covering of the *sacrament house*"—"Item an antipend for the *sacrament house* with a dornick towel to the same."[1] Moreover, at St Andrews, Kintore, Cullen, Deskford, and Pluscarden, the aumbries have sculptured angels holding up a monstrance containing the Host (216). At Auchindoin is the inscription, "HIC EST CORPUS DOMINI NOSTRI JESU CHRISTI VIRGINIS MARIE"; still more definite is the inscription at Kinkell. At Deskford are two inscriptions; one from St John's Gospel: "EGO SUM PANIS VIVUS QUI DE CELO DESCENDI QUIS MANDUCAVERIT EX HOC PANE VIVET IN AETERNUM—*Johans Sesto et cetera.*" The other text, "OS MEUM ES ET CARO MEA," is from Genesis xxix. 14. At Cullen is the inscription (abbreviated), "CARO MEA VERE EST CIBUS ET SANGUIS MEUS VERE POTUS QUI MANDUCAT MEAM CARNEM ET BIBIT MEUM SANGUINEM VIVET IN ETERNUM." While at Auchindoin, in shape the aumbry is just a monstrance rendered in stone (218).

Of these Scottish sacrament houses, one of the earliest is that in San Salvador at St Andrews, which was founded as a collegiate in 1458; this has an ogee arch, with foliated crockets and finial, circumscribing an oblong recess; it is near the high altar, on the gospel side, *i.e.*, the north, and once had a door. At Fowlis Easter the collegiate church was founded in 1546. The sacrament house is placed towards the north end of the east gable of the church, with its sill about three and a half feet above the ancient floor level (213). At Airlie is a small example, not *in situ*; it is of similar design to those of St Andrews and Fowlis. In the ruined church of Kinkell, Aberdeen, is a cruciform sacrament house, with angels in the centre compartment adoring the Host in a monstrance; above is a slab now blank, below the aumbry. On the cross-arm is the inscription, "HIC EST SERVATUM CORPUS DE VIRGINE NATUM," which puts beyond doubt the intended destination of the structure. Below are the date, 1524; the initials of Alexander Galloway, who was then rector; and a contraction of "MEMORARE" (217). It is in the north wall of the chancel, within a few feet of the east end. In Kintore church, Aberdeen, is a tabernacled aumbry, between four and five feet high, now situated in the staircase wall of the nave, which was constructed of the materials and debris of the old building. The upper part of the aumbry consists

[1] Rev. Dr Fowler in *Rites of Durham*, p. 345.

of a representation of a monstrance containing the Host, supported on either hand by angels in albs and crossed stoles. Below is the top of an aumbry, with marks of the hinges and fastening of a door now gone. In this design there are flanking balusters of early Renaissance type, similar in character to those of an aumbry in S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome, the work of

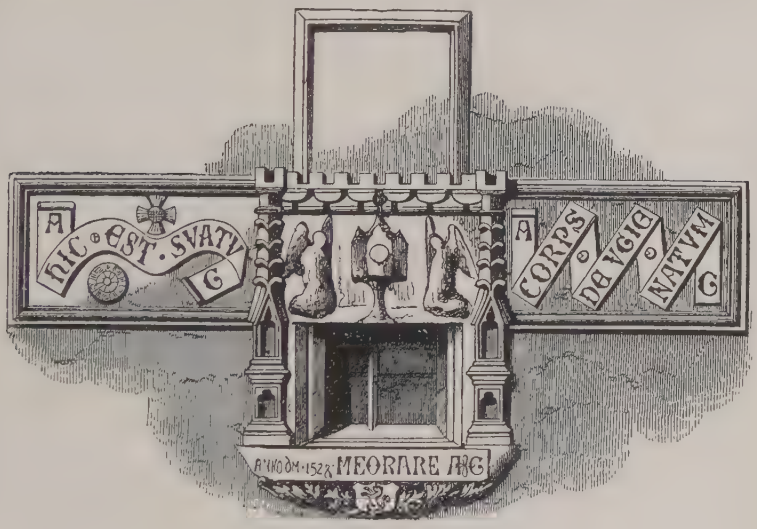


Kintore

Mino de Fiesole. At Turriff is a sacrament house, not later than 1541, nearly wholly walled up. At Auchendoin is a remarkable example, also early in the sixteenth century (218). At Cullen is an aumbry of similar design to those at St Andrews, Fowlis, and Airlie, which is probably A.D. 1543. Here are marks in the stonework which show that provision had been made for veiling the tabernacle as well as for securing it with a door. At Deskford the aumbry is the most elaborate of all, with a recess

in the centre; it is in the north wall of the chancel, near the east end, as also are those of Turriff, Cullen, and Deskford. That at Pluscarden is known to have been brought from Flanders; it stands north of the original site of the high altar. All the above sacrament houses occur between St Andrews and Elgin; another has been discovered on the Bass Rock.

In the fifteenth century many very beautiful examples in Italy were carved in marble or molded in terra cotta or majolica. From this *quatre cento* work in Italy the Scotch examples seem to have derived some part of their detail and emblematic decora-



F. G. I.

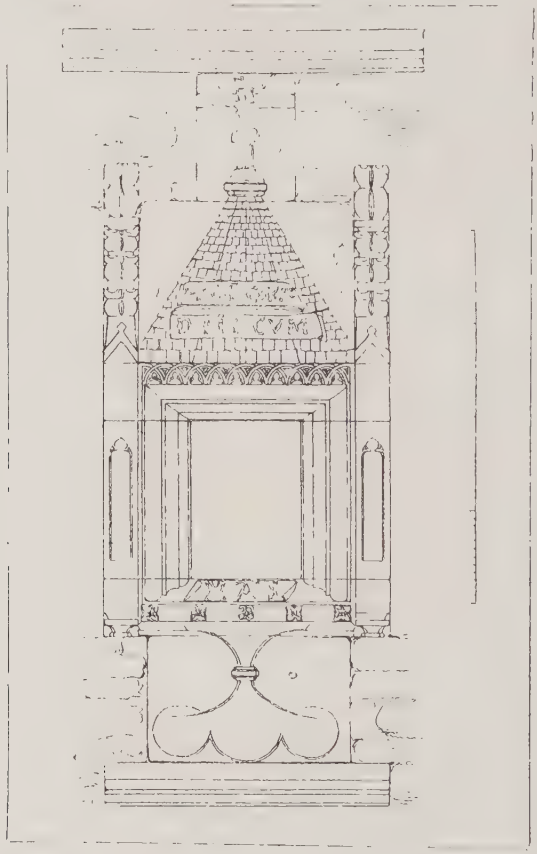
Kinkell

tion, such as the balusters at Kintore, and the angels supporting a chalice-shaped monstrance containing the Host; the inscriptions also occur in Italy.

The oldest sacrament houses existing are those of the churches of Rome: SS. Cosimo and Damiano, S. Sebastiano sul monte, S. Clemente, S. Maria in Trastevere, and others. In these churches the modern tabernacle placed on the altar has now been adopted, but the ancient aumbries remain. At S. Croce in Gerusalemme, the old aumbry, in spite of modern regulations and by virtue of immemorial usage, continues to serve its original purpose[1]

[1] For a detailed account of the Scotch sacrament houses see the paper by Mr A. Macpherson in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, xxv. 89-116.

So also with a number of other ancient aumbries, especially in Germany; their continued use is tolerated on account of their venerable history. The following are particularly fine examples. One in the chapel of St John's Hospital, Bruges, is in the form



A. M.

Auchindoin

of a rich stone sepulchre, with perforated brass doors, and provided with metal branches for tapers: it is on the north side of the choir, and is still used for the reservation of the sacrament. On the north side of the choir of S. Sebald, Nuremberg, is a rich example, early in the fourteenth century, closed by an oak door covered with scroll hinges and wrought ironwork, and with a

very elaborate lock plate: in the upper part of the door is a perforated wicket of iron lattice-work, for the admission of air. Another is at Heilbronn, with double doors and under a lofty canopy.

In addition to these is a still more elaborate class of sacrament houses, which remind one of the East Anglia fonts with spires of tabernacle work, such as that at Ufford, Suffolk;[1] they usually stand on the gospel side of the choir. That at St Lawrence, Nuremberg, is upwards of 60 ft. high, and is the work of the famous Adam Kraft; the recess has three perforated panels of gilt brass, with emblems of the Blessed Sacrament. A similar example is to be seen in Ulm cathedral; others in the sacristy of Cologne cathedral, Bamberg, etc. Flanders also has or had magnificent examples. In Louvain cathedral, recently destroyed by the German vandals, was a detached tabernacle north of the choir, with standards and brackets for lights, as at St Lawrence, Nuremberg, "a splendid monument of art and piety still used for the reservation of the blessed sacrament." In the church of Léau, near Tirlemont, is a tabernacle house of alabaster, standing in the north transept, designed after ancient tradition with a very lofty canopy; round the base is a rich brass railing, with bowls and prickets for lights and tapers. It is 52 ft. high, and was executed in 1550-52 by the architect of the Hotel de Ville at Antwerp: there is a cast of it in the South Kensington Museum. In the choir of Cologne cathedral a tabernacle house, about 60 ft. high, was pulled down early in the nineteenth century to make room for three arm-chairs and an iron railing.[2]

[1] Illustrated in the writer's *Fonts and Font Covers*, p. 280.

[2] Pugin's *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornaments*, p. 223 (London, 1868).

CHAPTER IX

EASTER SEPULCHRE

THE ceremonies of the Easter sepulchre go back to a very early date, being mentioned in the *Concordia Dunstani*, the latest possible date for which is 988 A.D. An early representation of an Easter sepulchre occurs on an ivory plaque preserved in the treasury of Nancy cathedral,[1] and dating from the tenth or eleventh century; below are the soldiers sleeping; above is represented a domical building; in the centre of it is a niche with open door, corresponding exactly to the design seen at Sibthorpe and Heckington (238). The use of the sepulchre continued up to the Reformation, and even a little later. In 1538 Bishop Longland, preaching before Henry VIII., finished by exhorting his hearers, "as of old custom hath here this day been used, every one of you, or ye depart, with most entire devotion kneeling before our Saviour Lord God . . . *who lyeth in yonder sepulchre*, in honour of Him, of His passion and death, and of His 5 wounds, to say 5 paternosters, 5 aves, and one credo; that it may please His merciful goodness to make us partners of the merits of this His most glorious passion, blood, and death." In that same year the light before the sepulchre was expressly excluded from the list of superstitious lights. Also in 1551 payments of 6d. and 12d. were made at Minchinhampton "for watchyng the sepulker." In Queen Mary's time Easter sepulchres were again set up, only to be finally disused in Elizabeth's reign. Thus in 1560, at Winterton, Lincolnshire, there were burnt "the pascall post, the *sepulchre* and the maydens' light." In 1561 the Easter sepulchre at St Lawrence, Reading, fetched the high price of 26s. 8d. Of many of the Easter sepulchres in Lincolnshire the fate is recorded; some were given to the poor for firewood; of others were made cupboards, biers, hencoops, steps, and necessaries. At Croxton

[1] Illustrated in Fleury's *La Messe*, ii. 67.

the Easter sepulchre was converted into "a shelf to set dishes on"; at Castle Bytham into a communion table.[1]

The Easter sepulchre was a very favourite object of parish devotion. At Rolvenden, Kent, in 1533, John Asten left £6 "to the making at my proper cost an honest Sepulchre for the Blessed Body of Our Lord to be laid in at Easter in the church."[2]

J. F. E.

Maxey, Northants

In 1553 the inventory of St Mary-at-Hill, E.C., includes "a long Christ with the frame of the sepulchre in it"; this would seem to be a wooden chest in which the framework of the Easter sepulchre was packed away till it should be wanted in the ensuing year.

[1] See Peacock's *Church Furniture.*

[2] *Testamenta Cantiana*, p. 389.

Bequests to maintain lights in front of it are very numerous. Those who could afford it left enough to pay in perpetuity for a taper weighing 5 lb.; very often a cow; *e.g.*, in 1528 Richard Nethersole left the church of Wymynswold, Kent, a cow: "I will that one within the parish shall ever have to farm and the profit of the cow, so that he maintain a taper of 4 lb. of wax at the least yearly to the honour of the Holy Resurrection of

F. B.

East Harling, Norfolk

Our Lord." In 1516 Thomas Hunt of Cransley, Northants, bequeathed "10 ewe sheep to the preparing and furnishing of the sepulchre, and that the increase of them may be to the supportacion of the same." Another left 2 lb. of wax; another 10 bee hives; another half a quarter of barley; another a coverlet; another a sheep; another a carpet "to the cross for to lay on the sepulchre";[1] another an acre of land; another 12 brass dishes, 14d. each; another one ewe sheep, or a sheep and

[1] Serjeantson and Longden, *ibid.*, 229.

S.

Stratford-on-Avon

a lamb.[1] In 1370 a guild in the parish of St Botolph without Aldgate was founded in honour of the Body of Christ and to maintain thirteen wax lights burning about the sepulchre in the time of Easter.

The Easter sepulchre was watched by day and by night, from Good Friday to Easter Sunday; partly from an ancient belief that the final appearing of Christ would be early some Easter Sunday. Sometimes, no doubt, the watching was by voluntary devotion; sometimes paid watchers were provided. Thus payments were made in 1485 at St Stephen's, Walbrook, "to the Clerks for coals, water, and ale, and candle when they *watched the sepolker*"; similar entries occur at Great Yarmouth, Waltham abbey, and elsewhere. Verses remain of a hymn, probably for the night watchers:—

"Habeamus ergo curam
Circa Christi sepulchuram
Vigilando noctibus;
Ut, cum secum vigilamus,
In aeterno valeamus
Auspiciis celestibus."

Lights were kept burning near it, including the great Paschal candle.[2] Over the Easter sepulchre at St Edmund, Sarum, in addition to the great sepulchre taper and the Paschal taper, were a hundred candles fixed on prickets or pins of beech.[3] In 1543 T. Goodman of Bradden gave "unto the Sepulchre light a brown cow of the value of 12s."[4]

The ceremonies attaching to the Easter sepulchre were of a very elaborate character. They are fully described in the *Rites of Durham*. In Durham cathedral on Good Friday "the Adoration of the Cross being ended, two monks carried the

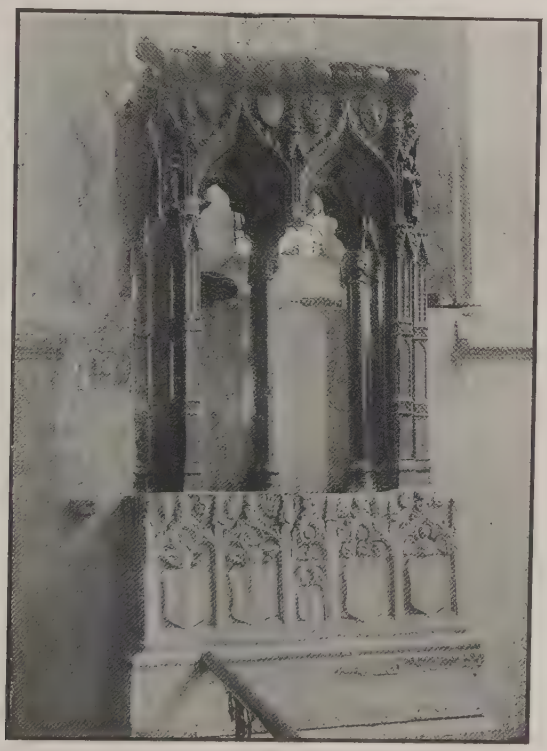
[1] Hussey's *Testamenta Cantiana*.

[2] The use of the Paschal candle was quite independent of the sepulchre. (*a*) The sepulchre was used from Good Friday till early on Easter Sunday, on which day the Cross and the Host were removed from the sepulchre. The sepulchre itself (according to Sarum use) was removed on the Friday in Easter week. (*b*) The Paschal candle was blessed and set up on Easter Eve, and was left alight for the three following days, both day and night, and after that on certain days only. According to Sarum use it was removed before Mass on the day after Ascension Day. At Hereford, however, the Paschal candle was used up to Whitsunday (see Bradshaw and Wordsworth's *Lincoln Statutes*, Part II., p. 67).—S. J. M. P.

[3] Cox's *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 60.

[4] Serjeantson and Longden, p. 229.

Cross to the Sepulchre with great reverence; which was set up that morning (*i.e.*, Good Friday) on the north side of the quire nigh unto the High Altar, before the service time, and there laid it in the said Sepulchre with great devotion, with another representation or image of our Saviour Christ, in whose breast they enclosed with great reverence the most Holy and Blessed



J. F. E.

Stanton Harcourt, Oxon.

Sacrament of the Altar, censing and praying to it upon their knees a great space; setting two tapers lighted before it which burned till Easter Day in the morning that it was taken forth." "Upon Easter Day there was in the Church of Durham very solemn service between three and four o'clock in the morning in honour of the Resurrection, when two of the eldest monks of the quire came to the Sepulchre set up on Good Friday after the Passion, all covered with red velvet and embroidered with

gold, out of which with great reverence they took an extreme beautiful image of Our Saviour, representing the Resurrec-

E. C.

Twywell, Northants

tion, with a cross in his hand, in the breast whereof was inclosed in the brightest crystal the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, through which crystal the Blessed Host was visible to

the beholders.[1] Then after the elevation of the said image, carried by the said two monks upon a velvet cushion all embroidered, singing the anthem of 'Christus Resurgens,' they brought it to the High Altar." The following description is quoted by Mr Bloxam.[2]

"In 1559, Thomas Naogeorgus published in Latin verse, at Basel, the *Regnum Papisticum*, a satirical work, in a great measure derisive of the rites and ceremonies of the Church of Rome. This was 'Englyshed,' or rendered into English verse by Barnabe Googe in 1570:—

Good Friday.—

"Two Priestes the next day following, upon their shoulders beare
The image of the Crucifix, about the altar nere:
. . . . . .
Another Image doe they get, like one but newly deade,
With legges stretcht out at length and handes upon his body spreade:
And him with pompe and sacred song, they beare unto his graue,
His bodie all being wrapt in lawne and silkes and sarcenet braue;
. . . . . .
And least in graue he should remaine, without some companie,
The singing bread is layde with him, for more idolatrie:
The Priest the Image worships first, as fallest to his turne,
And frankensence and sweete perfumes before the bread doth burne:
With tapers all the people come, and at the barriars stay,
Where downe upon their knees they fall, and night and day they pray:
And violets and every kinde of flowres about the graue
They straw, and bring in all their giftes, and presents that they have.
. . . . . .

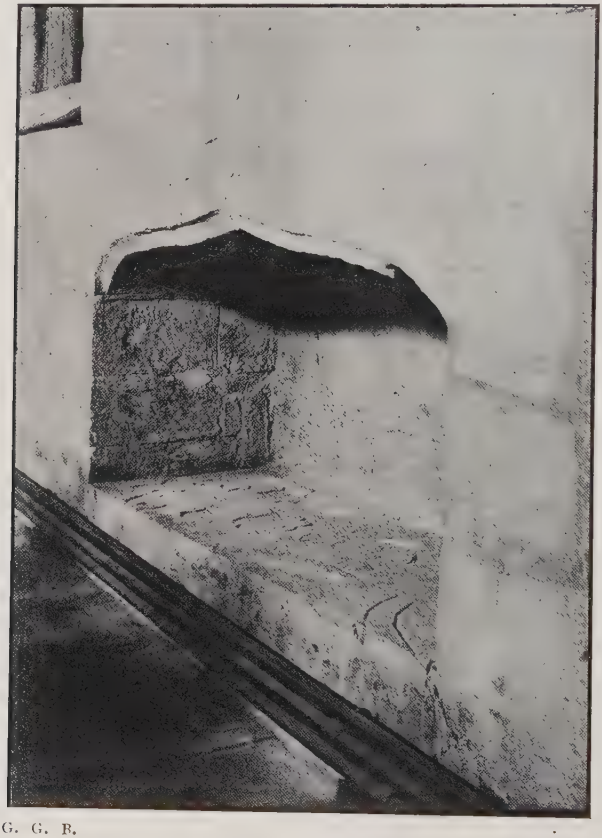
Easter day—

At midnight then with carefull minde, they up to mattens ries,
The Clarke doth come, and after him the Priest with staring eies:
The Image and the breade from out the graue (a worthie sight)
They take, and Angels two they place in vesture white,
. . . . . .
In some place solemne sightes and showes and pageants fayre are play'd,
With sundrie sortes of maskers braue, in straunge attire arayd,
As where the Maries three doe meete, the sepulchre to see,
And John with Peter swiftly runnes, before him there to bee."

[1] *Gothic Architecture*, ii. 112.

[2] In the inventories of Lincoln minster in 1536 and 1548 there was an image silver gilt, with a void in the breast (where the Host was placed). It represented Our Lord with a cross in His hand, and weighed 37 oz. (Mansel Sympson's *Lincoln*, p. 266). At Quelven, Brittany, is a statue of Our Lady, which being opened, a triptych painted with twelve scenes is visible; this statue is resorted to by thousands of sailor folk at the Pardon.

In many cases, both here and abroad, the resurrection of Our Lord was dramatised. This is mentioned as already customary as early as 1194 in the constitutions of Hugh, Bishop of Lichfield: "On Christmas Eve it is the custom to have a representation of the Shepherds, and at dawn on Easter Day of the Resurrection



G. G. B.

Middleton, Lancashire

of Our Lord." At St Lawrence, Reading, there is an entry in 1507 of "twopence to Sybil Derling for nails for the Sepulchre, and for rosin to the *Resurrection Play*." The following description of the representation is from Bishop Trollope's translation of the Rouen Office for Easter morning.[1] At the end

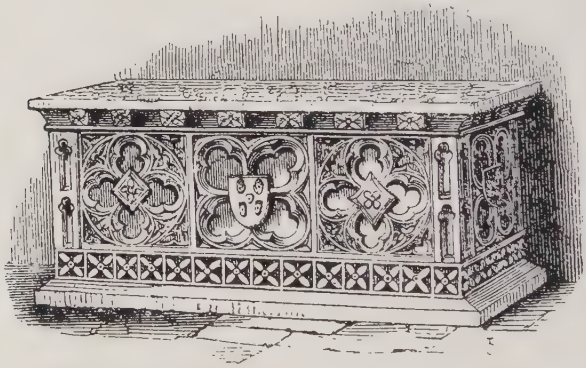
[1] *Associated Societies' Reports*, xxiii. 292.

of the third response the Office of the Sepulchre is thus performed. Three canon deacons, robed in dalmatics and amices, having on their heads women's attire, carrying a little vessel, come through the middle of the choir, and hurrying with downcast looks towards the sepulchre, together say, "Who shall roll away this stone for us?" This over, a boy dressed in white, like an angel, and holding a wand in his hand, says before the altar, "Whom seek ye in the sepulchre?" Then the Marys answer, "The crucified Jesus of Nazareth." Then says the angel, "He is not here, for He is risen"; showing the place with his finger. This done, the angel departs very quickly, and two priests in tunics, from the higher seat, sitting within the sepulchre, say, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" The third woman answers thus, "Sir, if thou hast taken Him hence, tell us." Then says the woman, showing the cross, "Because they have taken away my Lord." Then the two seated priests say, "Whom seek ye, women?" Then the Marys kiss the spot and afterwards go forth from the sepulchre. In the meantime a priest canon, representing the Lord, in alb and stole, holding a cross, meeting them at the left corner of the altar, says, "Mary." Which as soon as she has heard, she falls quickly at his feet, and with a loud voice says, "Rabboni." Then the priest, restraining

J. H. P.

Bampton, Oxon.

her, says, "Touch me not." This over, the priest appears again at the right-hand corner of the altar, and says to those passing across before the altar, "Hail, fear not." This done, he hides himself; and the women hearing this, gladly bow before the altar turned toward the choir, and sing this verse, "Hallelujah; the Lord hath risen. Hallelujah." This done, the archbishop or priest before the altar with the thurible says aloud, "We praise thee, O Lord." And thus the Office is finished. Very similar is the account given in the *Regularis Concordia*, which has been attributed to St Dunstan, but with greater probability to St Ethelwold, of Winchester, who died in 984. The music of this drama of the sepulchre is preserved in manuscripts of the twelfth century at Tours and Orleans, of the thirteenth



J. H. P.

Porlock, Somerset

century at Paris, and of the fourteenth century at Cividale; also in the eleventh-century MS. 473 in the Parker Collection at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; and in the fourteenth-century Processional, MS. v. 3. 2. 10, in Archbishop Marsh's Library, Dublin, which contain *Angelica de Christi Resurrectione*, viz., "Quem quaeritis?" (See Dr W. H. Frère's *Introduction to the Winchester Troper* (Henry Bradshaw Society), 1894, pp. xvi-xviii, with text, p. 17, and the last two facsimiles in that volume.)

Besides this liturgical drama in church, a mystery play, in which the scriptural account was similarly paraphrased, amplified, and supplemented, was sometimes performed out of doors. At Reading it was performed in the Forbery, a level space with a hill on one side, which would form a stand

for the spectators. In Cornwall are several amphitheatres which may have been used for this purpose; that of St Just is well preserved; it is an exact circle, 126 ft. in diameter, and with seven rows of seats all round. The text is in existence of a mystery play on the same subject performed at Coventry in 1415 by the cartwrights, carvers, and sawyers.[1]

F. R. T.

Harlington, Middlesex

Three forms of Easter sepulchre seem to have been in use. (1) By far the most common was a temporary structure of wood; this is the one described above in the *Rites of Durham*; (2) it was rarely a special structure of masonry, but (3) a chest-tomb, or a canopied tomb with a flat upper slab, was often utilised, on which to place the wooden framework.

[1] Heales, p. 284.

Some churches, however, seem to have had none of any kind. Out of 170 Lincolnshire churches from which returns were made, only 50 expressly stated that they had Easter sepulchres, and 2 expressly stated that they had none.

Usually, no doubt, it was quite a simple framework of wood, decorated with crimson hangings. It was not removed on Easter Day,[1] for a direction exists, "notandum est quod sepulchrum domini stabit continue in loco suo ab hac die usque ad proximam feriam, et tunc ante missam amoveatur."[2] In 1509 Alice Bray left to the church of Chelsfield "a taper,

S. S.

Lincoln Minster

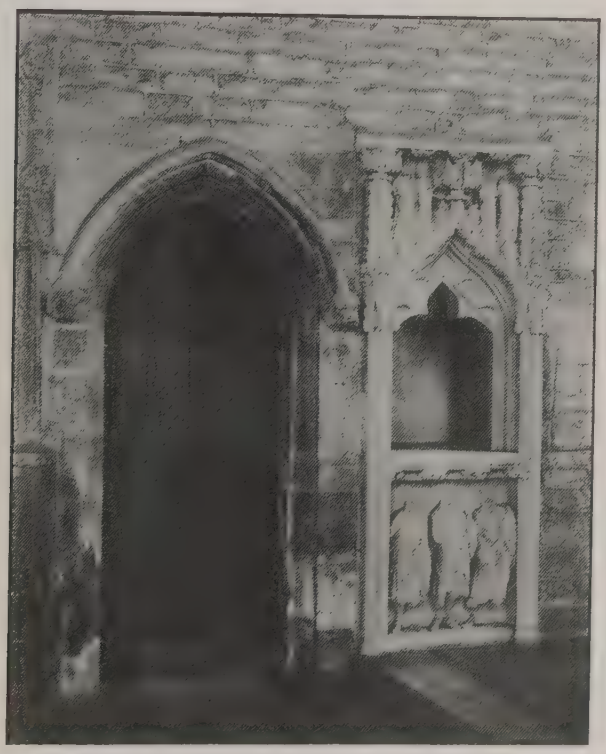
3 lb. of wax, to burn before the Sepulchre of Our Lord from Good Friday to Thursday in Easter week to be burning at times convenient according as other lights be wont and used to be kept there about the sepulchre."[3] At Tunstall, Kent, it was a wooden frame, constructed out of deals; for in 1546 Sir William Cromer left "for the making of a new frame for

[1] "M. S. Pen. Auct.," in Bloxam's *Glimpse*, p. 175.

[2] A more definite instruction is to be found in Frere's *Use of Sarum*, Part I., p. 220; "Die Veneris in ebdomada Paschae ante missam amoveatur sepulchrum."—S. J. M. P.

[3] Leland E. Duncan in *St Paul's Ecclesiol. Soc.*, iii. 260.

the Sepulchre, and a stone to lie upon it, £6. 13s. 4d.; and as many Estriche birdes as shall make it."[1] In some cases the temporary structure of wood was on a more splendid scale than even that of stone. In 1470 "Maister Canynge" delivered to the church of St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, "a new sepulchre well gilt with gold; Item, an image of God Almighty rising out



H. B. P.

Navenby, Lincolnshire

of the same sepulchre; Item, thereto longeth Heaven, made of timber and stained clothes; Item, Hell, made of timber and ironwork thereto, with Devils to the number of 13; Item,

[1] Hussey's *Testamenta Cantiana*, p. 345. "Estriche bordes" is a term used for deals imported from East Anglia. "Birdes" appears to be an error of transcription; owing to which it has been assumed that this framework was decorated with "ostrich feathers."

4 knights, armed, keeping the sepulchre, with weapons in their hands; that is to say, 2 axes and 2 spears and 2 pavés; Item, 4 pair of angels' wings for 4 angels, made of timber and well painted; Item, the Fadre, the Crowne and Visage, the ball with a cross upon it, well gilt with fine gold; Item, the Holy Ghost coming out of Heaven into the sepulchre; Item, longeth to the 4 angels, 4 chevelers."

Of the wooden Easter sepulchres two only are believed to exist; one is or was in Snitterfield vicarage, Warwick. It contains panels of Christ before Pilate, Christ bearing the Cross, the Deposition from the Cross, the Resurrection and the Appearance to St Mary Magdalene; but these panels are framed in a seventeenth-century chest; the panels themselves seem to have been carved between 1380 and 1400.[1] Another is now in private hands in the north of Derbyshire, and is said to have been ignorantly ejected from the church of Hampton, Worcester; it is of fifteenth-century date and table form, with panelled and traceried sides; it is 4 ft. 3 in. long, 2 ft. broad, and nearly 3 ft. high.[2]

Very frequently, however, the Easter sepulchre was placed on a stone chest-tomb standing in a canopied recess of the north wall of the chancel, or between the chancel and a northern chapel, as at East Harling (222) and Long Melford. The wooden framework placed in the latter is described by Roger Martin, who died in 1580. Here there was a frame of timber to hold a number of tapers, and "the sepulchre was always placed . . . at the north end of the high altar, between that and Mr Clopton's little chapel there, in a vacant place of the wall, I think upon a tomb of one of his ancestors.[3] The said frame, with the tapers, was set near the steps going up to the said altar." In 1496 John Pympe of Nettlestead, Kent, wills as to his burial, ". . . whereas the Sepulchre of Our Lord is wont to stand at the feast of Easter, and to be laid there in a tomb of stone, made under such form that the Blessed Sacrament and the Holy Cross may be laid upon the stone of the said tomb in manner of Sepulchre at the feast abovesaid." Again, in 1499, Lady Townshend ordered her body to be buried at Rainham, Norfolk, and a new tomb to be made, upon which tomb to be cunningly graven a sepulchre for Easter Day. In 1531 Lord Dacre says, "My body to be buried in the church of Hurstmonceaux, on the

[1] It is illustrated in Col. Hart's "*Old Chests*" in *Birmingham and Midland Transactions*, xx. 80.

[2] Cox and Harvey, *ibid.*, p. 77.

[3] This was John Clopton, who died in 1497.

W. M. D.

Hawton, Notts.

north side of the high altar. I will that a tomb be there made for placing the Sepulchre of Our Lord." Then there are very explicit directions given of a will dated 1479, and proved in 1485, of Thomas Windsor: "My body to be buried on the north side of the quire . . . before the image of Our Lady, where the Sepulchre of Our Lord standeth, whereupon I will that there be made a plain tomb of marble of competent height, to the intent that it may bear the blessed body of Our Lord, and the Sepulchre at Easter to stand on the same."[1] This tomb is now removed to the west end of the north aisle, and the brasses on it have disappeared.[2]

Hundreds of such tombs remain; it is usual to term them "Easter Sepulchres"; it must, however, be borne in mind that they are only pedestals on which the temporary wooden framework of an Easter sepulchre was placed, *e.g.*, Stanningfield, Maxey (221), East Harling (222), and Stratford-on-Avon.[3] The charming little fourteenth-century tomb at Stanton Harcourt, Oxon., may well have been used as the pedestal of an Easter sepulchre (225). So also that at Hemingborough, Yorkshire. At South Pool, Devon, is a tomb evidently intended as an Easter sepulchre; for the effigy is detached and could be moved away at Easter, and at the back of the arch is a sculptured representation of the Resurrection and the discomfiture of the guard.

In very numerous cases also recesses on the floor level are constructed on the north side of the chancel: they are of all periods, and they were probably intended for the framework of the Easter sepulchre. An interesting example of the thirteenth century is seen at Twywell (226), where it is combined with an aumbry and gospel desk. The fine example of the fourteenth century at Stanton Harcourt is illustrated in Parker's *Glossary*, fifth edition, text, p. 422. Another from Middleton, Lancashire, is illustrated on p. 228. At Bampton, Oxon., are two recesses of the fifteenth century, superposed (229). On the north side of the altar of Magdalen College, Oxford, is a small vaulted recess in which is placed the tomb of the founder of the college; it was originally built for the Easter sepulchre, as appears from an inventory of the furniture belonging to this chapel, printed by Rev. J. R. Bloxam, Fellow of the College.

[1] Rock's *Church of Our Fathers*, iii. 79.

[2] See Collins' *Peerage*, vol. iv. p. 74, ed. 1779; and Haines' *Monumental Brasses*, II. lvi., note. This tomb is at Stanwell, Middlesex.

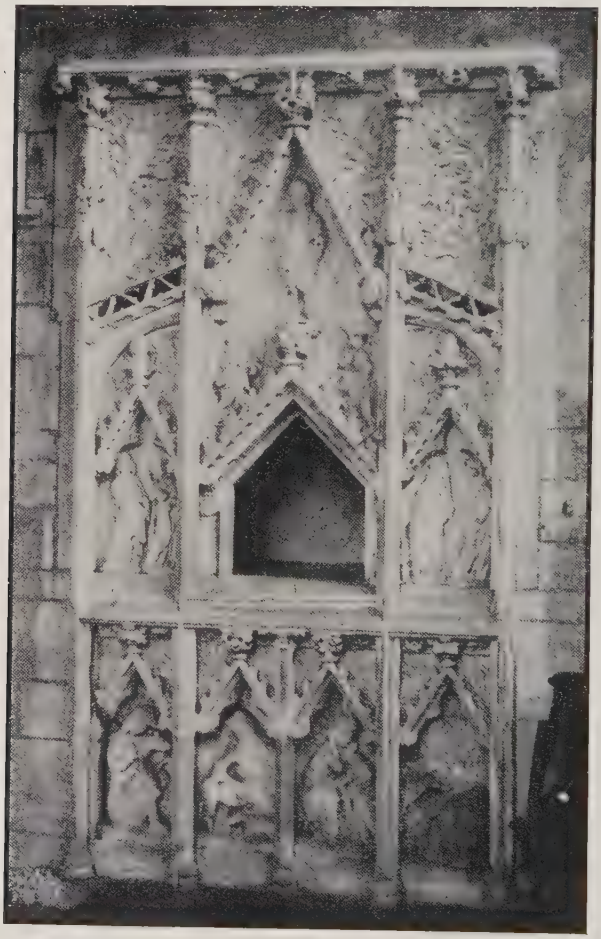
[3] Below is seen the tomb of the last known dean of the college of Stratford-on-Avon, who is recorded to have "re-edified" the choir in 1491. On the left is the mural monument of Shakespeare (223).

W. M. D.

Hawton, Notts.

In some cases chest-tombs are jammed into the north-east angle of the chancel along the north wall, and ornamented only on their south and west sides; an unusually rich example remains at Porlock, Somerset (230), another at St John's, Winchester.

From the Easter sepulchre resting on a table-tomb it is no long step to that which is placed in a niche of its own in the wall. The transition is well seen in comparing Stanningfield



W. M.

Heckington, Lincolnshire

with Harlington (231), and Lincoln minster and Sibthorpe, Notts (232). At Lincoln there is a tomb westward of the Easter sepulchre combined in one design; at Sibthorpe there is a segmental recess in the wall for a tomb, and above the

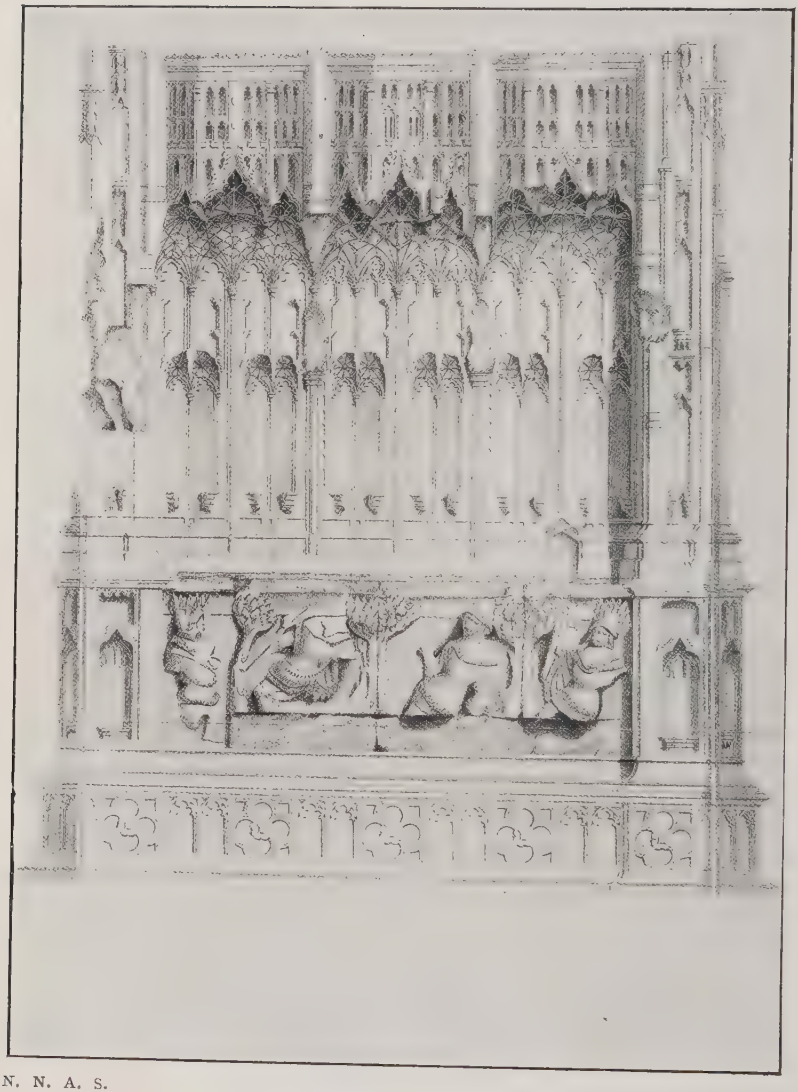
segmental arch is an ogee niche for the Easter sepulchre, surmounted by a pedimental canopy. It only remains to omit the tomb altogether, and we reach the final development, as exhibited in such examples as Hawton (237), Navenby (233), and Patrington (239), which display the richest design of the half century before the advent of the Black Death. In most of these

C. G.

Patrington, Yorkshire

the intent of the structure is clearly marked by the representation of the sleeping Roman soldiers; *e.g.*, at Hawton, Sibthorpe, Navenby, Patrington, and Heckington[1] (238).

[1] Mr Micklethwaite, *Ornaments of the Rubric*, p. 55, says, "I have expressed a doubt whether such structures as those of Navenby, Heckington, and Hawton, which are generally called Easter sepulchres, are not rather 'Sacrament houses.'" The representation of Roman soldiers sleeping beneath negatives this idea.



N. N. A. S.

Northwold, Norfolk

Of the sculptured Easter sepulchres, the finest are those at Hawton, Sibthorpe, and Arnold, Notts.; Heckington, Lincoln minster, Navenby, and Horbling, Lincolnshire; Northwold,

Norfolk; Bampton, Oxon.; Arlesey, Bedford; Withybrook, Warwick.[1]

Sometimes brasses contain representations of Our Lord stepping from a high tomb, with a long cross-headed staff and banner in His hand; with either two or four Roman soldiers below; *e.g.*, Swansea, 1490; Great Coates, Lincolnshire, Sir Thomas Barnardiston, 1503; All Hallows, Barking, 1510; Narburgh, Norfolk, 1545; Slaugham, Sussex, 1547; Cranleigh, Surrey, 1503. Some are plainly not *in situ*,[2] but may originally have been affixed to the top slab of a chest-tomb on the north side of the chancel. The same subject was also common in painted retables; *e.g.*, in Norwich cathedral (67); and in ivories and alabaster "tables."

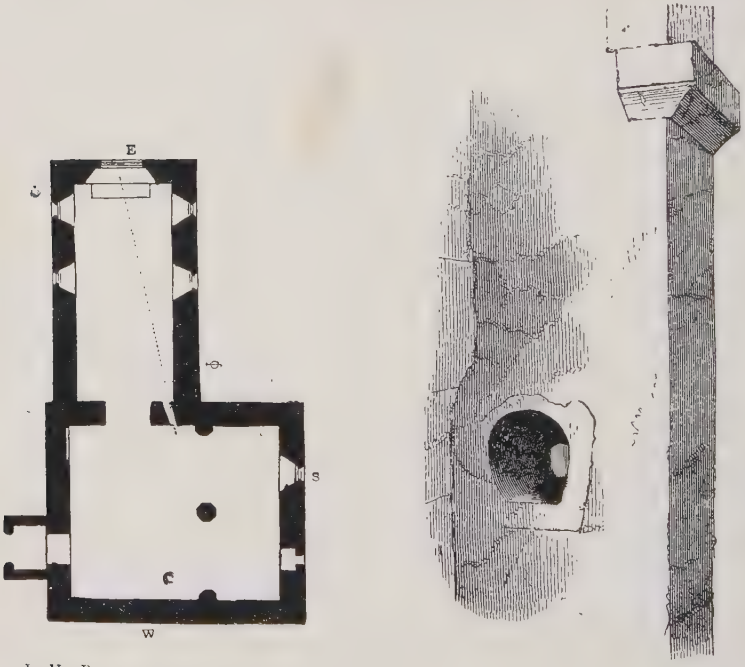
[1] For detailed list see Keyser's *List*, p. 356; Heales' paper in *Archæologia*, p. xlii., and *English Church Furniture*, p. 77. In all the lists is included an Easter sepulchre and alms-box at West Kirkby, Lincolnshire. Mr J. J. Creswell, however, reports that the alms-box is a piscina with an unmistakable drain; and that the back is built up of fragments of a late tomb.

[2] Heales, p. 292.

CHAPTER X

THE SQUINT

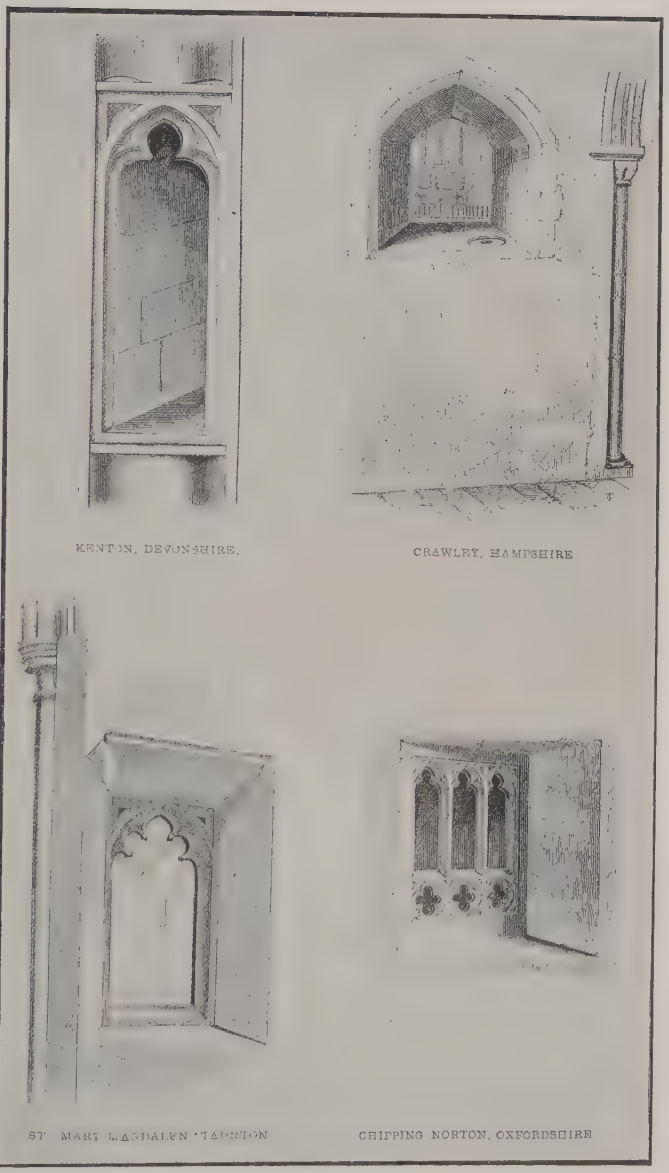
THE squint is an aperture, usually oblique, affording a view of an altar. The Camden Ecclesiological Society preferred to call it a hagioscope. For neither term is there mediæval precedent;



J. H. P.

Newnham Murren, Oxon.

but it is unnecessary to invent a long Greek term when a short and expressive English term can be found. Squints are of common occurrence, and are found at all periods; from the semicircular Norman squint ornamented with chevron at North



KENTON, DEVONSHIRE.

CRAWLEY, HAMPSHIRE

ST MARY MAGDALEN, TAUNTON

CHIPPING NORTON, OXFORDSHIRE

J. H. P.

Hinksey, Berks., right on to the Reformation. In size they vary greatly; from the small tube at Newnham Murren, Oxon., to the big apertures of Scawton, Yorkshire (249), and of Tarrant Rushton, Dorset, which is practically a big square-headed window of three lights, unglazed (248). As a rule the squint is rectangular and quite plain; but many exceptions occur. At

F. T. S. H.

Halford Bridge, Warwickshire

Newnham Murren the squint is constructed like a telescope, with a very small round opening to the east; so also at Enford, Wilts., there is but a small quatrefoil to the east. At Scawton the squint has a semicircular arch; frequently it has a pointed arch; *e.g.*, at Stockton, Wilts. (246); at Bridgwater the arch is four-centered (253). At Kenton, Devon, the arch is trefoiled (243); at Irthlingborough, Northants, it is a pointed arch and cinque

foliated (254). At Chipping Norton it resembles a square-headed window of three foliated arched lights, with a quatrefoil beneath each light (243). It is remarkable how rude a great number of the squints are; simply a hole hacked diagonally through the wall and left in the rough; *e.g.*, Wyre Piddle (245). In a few late examples, however, the design was assimilated to that of the windows, as at Irthlingborough (254), and, still better, at St Nicholas, Gloucester, Curdworth, Warwick,[1] and Tarrant Rushton (247). An early and charming treatment is seen at St Thomas, Lewes, and Rodmell,

G. G. B.

Wyre Piddle, Worcester

where a Norman pillar is inserted in the centre of the opening to carry the lintel (250). At Halford Bridge, Warwick, the squint is cruciform (244).

Usually a squint opens on to the high altar; but at times it is directed on to an altar in side chapel or aisle; thus at Quat, Salop, the squint opens from the nave on to the north chapel of the chancel.

Squints most frequently occur on one or both sides of a chancel

[1] At Curdworth only the southern squint is original. The woodwork above the chancel arch is part of the modern organ (249).

arch, where the arch is narrow.[1] In some cases they are original; in others the recess of a lateral altar may have been cut through to form a large squint. Or, as at Scawton, Yorks., the back wall of a lateral altar-recess may have been perforated so as to form a squint.[2] In a few cases the lateral recess has been cut away right down to the floor; giving the appearance of a triple chancel arch.[3] At Minster Lovell, Oxon., the squints are not so formed. In this church there is a central tower, resting not on the angles of nave, chancel, and transepts, but on piers separated from these angles by passages 10 or 12

F. J. P.

Stockton, Wilts.

ft. high. The two eastern of these four passages serve as squints: the two broad western passages may have been intended

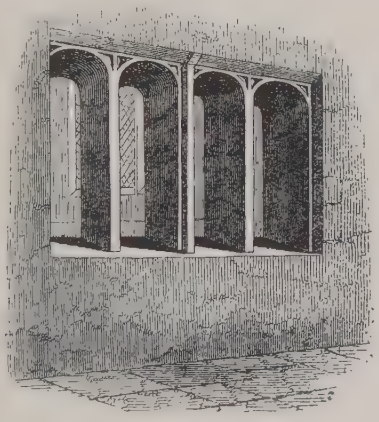
[1] It is questionable whether a squint in the normal position is to be regarded as belonging to the chancel or the nave. At any rate there was much controversy in mediæval times as to whether the chancel arch formed part of the chancel or the nave, and who consequently was responsible for its repair.—S. J. M. P.

[2] So also at Ashley and Otterbourne, Hants.

[3] Such a case is not to be confounded with those in which all three chancel arches were erected contemporaneously; as in the Anglo-Saxon eighth-century churches of Reculver, etc., and the Norman churches of Pyecombe, Sussex, etc.

for processional purposes (252). Squints are continued also from various other quarters; *e.g.*, from the eastern bays of the aisles, or from the transepts, or from a chancel aisle or chapel, or the upper room of a porch. There is a square squint at Christchurch, Hants, opening out of Prior Draper's chantry chapel. There is a squint opening out of the priest's room at Warmington, Warwick. Wingfield, Suffolk, was converted into a collegiate church, and priests' rooms, two stories high, remain on the north side of the chancel; from the upper room a large squint looks into the chancel (251).[1] At Charlton, Wilts., there are two oblique squints. In this church there is a porch, with

J. H. P.



Gloucester: St Nicholas

a tower above, at the north-west angle of the nave; one of the squints passes first through the east wall of the porch, then through the north wall of the nave, and gives a view on to the high altar (252). At Bridgwater, Somerset, is a porch in two stories adjoining the west side of the north transept. There are two oblique openings; the first from the upper room of the porch through the west wall of the transept, the second through the east wall of the transept; then the gaze passes through the choir screen to the high altar (253). Sometimes the squint is combined with a sedile, as at East Farleigh, Kent; sometimes with a piscina, as at St Matthew, Ipswich,[2] and

[1] See plans and drawings in the writer's *Introduction to English Church Architecture*, pp. 213, 219.

[2] Illustrated in *Suffolk A. A. Soc.*, vii. 140.

Crawley, Hants (243); sometimes with a stoup, as at St Mary's, Guildford. At Othery, Somerset, is a squint through a buttress and directed on to a low side window. Where a "domus reclusi" adjoined a church, an oblique squint was provided looking on to an altar; a good example remains

P. M. J.

Tarrant Rushton, Dorset

at Shere, Surrey, on the north side of the chancel.[1] At Peterborough "overhead were two chambers which common tradition

[1] For Anchorites and Anchorages see the writer's *Introduction to English Church Architecture*, vol. i. pp. 220-224, and the references there given: to which should be added *Hermits and Anchorites of England*, by Miss Rotha M. Clay, London, 1914.

F. T. S. H.

Curdworth, Warwickshire

F. H. C.

Scawton, Yorkshire

hath told to have been the habitation of a devout lady, called Agnes or Dame Agnes, out of whose lodging chamber there was a hole made askew in the window, walled up, having its prospect just upon the altar in the ladies' chapel and no more."[1]

G. C. D.

Rodmell, Sussex

A considerable number of *external* squints remain. While some of these gave on to the high altar from an anchorage, others were inside a vestry. There are many, however, which cannot be proved to have been either within an anchorage or a vestry, no mark of any external building being visible; it must be borne in mind, however, that an anchorage may have been of wood, and when removed, may have left no traces of its existence.[2]

Most of the squints look on the high altar as at Irthlingborough (254); a few on to minor altars. In some cases it will be found that, as at Great Bookham, Surrey, the squint looks on to the site of the old high altar, which, subsequent to the construction of the squint, had been moved eastward on the lengthening of the chancel. A squint, therefore, may sometimes enable one to ascertain the original length of the chancel and the original position of the high altar. So also at Minster Lovell, Oxon., there are two squints converging on the centre of the present chancel, not on the present high altar (252). The squint in Prior Draper's chantry Christchurch, bears on a spot much to the west of the present high altar.

What was the purpose of squints is by no means certain. Mr Micklethwaite was of opinion that they were generally arranged for the convenience of private pewholders. To which

[1] Gunton's *Peterborough*, p. 99.

[2] See Cranage's *Churches of Shropshire*, pp. 1072-1075.

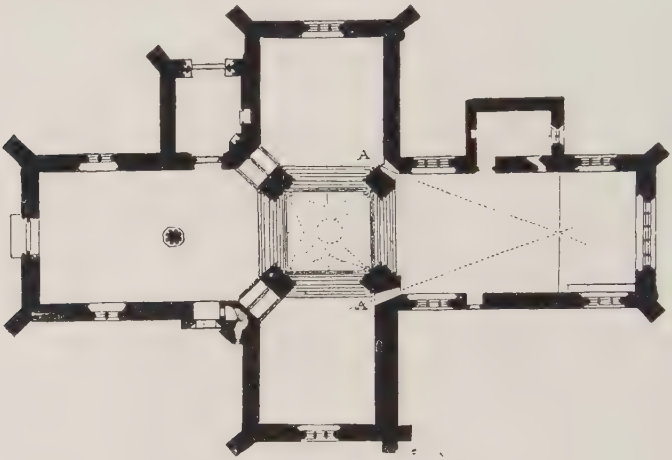
F. H. C.

Wingfield, Suffolk

F. B.

Wingfield, Suffolk

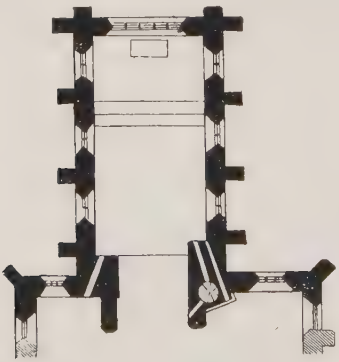
it may be objected that many squints are of the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, when there were no fixed seats in churches.



J. H. P.

Minster Lovell, Oxon.

Where there is a big squint like that at Tarrant Rushton, Dorset (248), or on either side of a chancel arch, as at Stockton (246), it can hardly be but that it was intended for the congregation at large to view the elevation of the Host. But sometimes the aperture is so small that not more than one person at a time could see through it. And what is to be said of such squints as those in the porch of Charlton, Wilts., and the upper chamber of the porch of Bridgwater? In such cases it has been suggested that near the western side of the squint there hung down the rope of the sanctus bell, and that the ringer was provided with a view of the altar so that he might be able to see the progress of Mass and know when to ring it. It is to be noted that there was no one uniform position for the sanctus bell. Sometimes it hung in a bell-cote over the eastern gable of the nave; sometimes on the choir screen, as at Salhouse, Norfolk;



J. H. P.

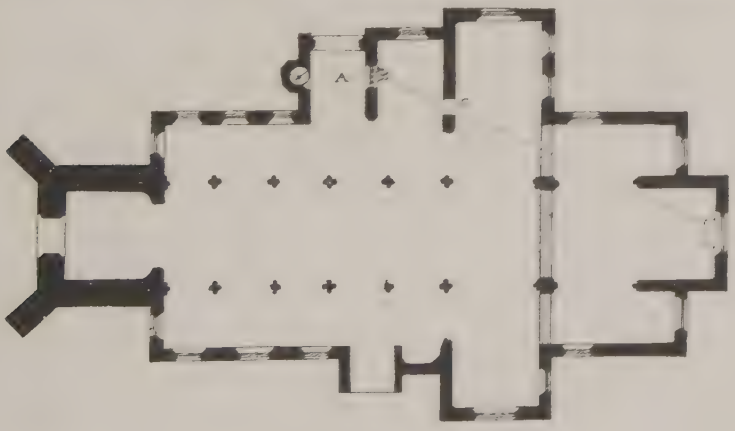
Charlton, Wilts.

sometimes on the choir wall, as at Tewkesbury, sometimes on the transept wall, as at Milton Abbey, sometimes it was one of the bells placed in the tower; in such a case there may be

J. H. P.

Bridgwater

found a doorway in the ringing chamber looking into the church;—as at Shere, Surrey: such a doorway being merely another form of squint.

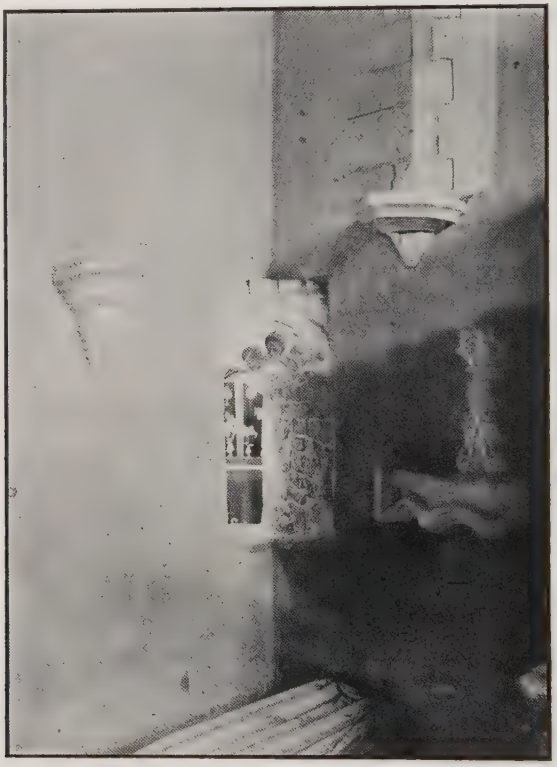


J. H. P.

Bridgwater, Somerset

Squints have often been glazed in modern times; it seems probable that some were glazed originally, *e.g.* that in the Mayor's chapel, Bristol.

In Pembrokeshire there is a special local treatment. It is quite common to find a large passage from the transepts into the chancel, opening by an arch at either end, and generally forming externally a small building occupying the angle. This



W. M.

Irthlingborough, Northants

space is sometimes lighted by a window of its own, so that it is more than a squint, being a passage as well. It was the extreme narrowness of the Pembrokeshire chancel arches which made such a passage desirable. A similar arrangement occurs at Whitchurch, Bristol.[1]

[1] *Arch. Cambrensis*, II., iii. 176.

APPENDIX

THE HOLY WATER STOUP

THE stoup or stock (*aspersorium*, *benitier*, *benatura*) was a vessel for holding holy water, placed at the entrance of churches, into which the faithful who entered dipped the fingers of the right hand, blessing themselves with the sign of the cross. As the *benedictio aquæ* usually took place once a week, before Sunday Mass, the stoup was on that day refilled. In this ceremony salt was first exorcised and then blessed. Then the water was exorcised and blessed. The salt was then thrown into the water *in modum crucis*, and another blessing was said over the two thus mixed. In one of the articles of visitation of Bishop Bonner, A.D. 1554, it is asked, "Whether there be at the entry of the church or within the door of the same, an holy water stock or pot, having in it holy water to sprinkle upon the enterer, to put him in remembrance both of his promise made at the time of his baptism, and of the shedding and sprinkling of Christ's blood upon the cross for his redemption; and also to put him in remembrance, that as he washes his body, so he should not forget to wash and cleanse his soul, and make it fair with virtuous and godly good living; and finally to put him in remembrance, that as water passeth and slideth away, so he shall not tarry and abide in this world, but pass and slide away as the water doth."

In the accounts of All Souls, Oxford, for 1548, is a charge "pro lapidibus ad aspersorium in introitu ecclesiæ"; this stoup, in a mutilated condition, still remains. The making of holy water was abolished by the Reformers, and nearly all stoups were destroyed, mutilated, or blocked up.[1]

[1] There is a survival of the making of holy water in the services for the baptism of children and adults, wherein the priest prays, "Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin." Before the Reformation holy water was made from time to time in the font; the font not being emptied after each baptism.—S. J. M. P.

Usually the holy water stoup was a stone basin; but sometimes it was a vessel of metal, earthenware, or wood, placed on a bracket or hung on a pin: *e.g.*, at Melton Mowbray, in 1556, there was paid "4s. for 4 stone of lead towards the making of three lead pans to set in the Holy Water stocks"; there were three stocks or stoups in this church. These three stoups in the same year cost 6s. 8d., "paid to Steven Andrew for 3 holy water stocks." At St Mary-at-Hill, E.C., the inventory of 1496 mentions "4 holy-water stoops of laton (brass)." At Pylle, Somerset, is a stoup with a lining of lead. At St Dunstan's, Canterbury, was "a stoup of lead for the holy water at the church door."

Sometimes the stoup formed a niche; sometimes it projected on a bracket; sometimes there were both niches and projection; sometimes it resembled a font; that is, it was a basin supported by a pillar or stem; its basin, however, was smaller than that of a font; and, unlike a font, had no drain: stoups of this type are not common; one occurs at Dodington, Somerset; others at Penmon, Anglesea; Castle Hedingham, Essex (165), and elsewhere. A double stoup, one above the other, occurs at Billingford and Weasenham St Peter, Norfolk. It is curious that, like the aumbry and squint, it very seldom received elaborate decorative treatment; a simple canopy indeed is occasionally found, as at Ecton, Northants; Harleton, Cambs.; but the magnificent tabernacle work of late Flamboyant or early Renaissance design which glorifies almost every stoup in Brittany, *e.g.*, Guimiliau (257), is almost wholly unknown in England. The stoups of Albury, Caldecote, and Feering, Essex, are exceptional; the two latter, including their canopies, are about six feet high.[1]

As the chief entrance into an English parish church was on the south side, the stoup usually occurs inside or outside the south porch, or outside or inside the south doorway; it is also found, however, near the north and west doors and porches, and elsewhere. Outside the porch of East Dereham, Norfolk, is a pair of stoups; so also at Irthlingborough, Northants. Occasionally it was in a pillar facing a doorway. The *Rites of Durham* says: "There were two fair holy water stones belonging to the Abbey church of Durham, of a very fair blue marble. The fairest of them stood within the north church door over against the said door, being wrought in the corner of the pillar, having a very fair shrine of wainscot ('wooden canopy') overhead, very finely painted with blue and little gilt stars, being

[1] Cox and Harvey, *ibid.*, p. 237.

N. D. Guimiliau

kept very clean, and always fresh water provided against every Sunday morning, wherein one of the monks did hallow the said water very early in the morning before divine service. The other stood within the south church door." The lay entrance into Durham cathedral then, as now, was from the north.

As the worshipper crossed himself with the right hand, stoups were placed, as far as possible, on the right of the door, porch, or pillar.

At Auckland, Durham, is a stoup, exhumed from the churchyard of St Andrew, which has been fashioned out of a Roman altar, the upper part being converted into a bowl. It is 2 ft. 6 in. high, and at the top was 1 ft. 8 in. square. On the front is a shield with the arms of Bishop Nevill (1438-1457).[1]

Occasionally a stoup has been converted into a font, a drain having been pierced into it; sometimes a font has been converted into a stoup. Domestic mortars have here and there been converted into stoups, as also into fonts.[2]

It was usual to attach "sprinklers," "strinkels," or "aspersers" to stoups; *e.g.*, at Wigtoft, Lincolnshire, in 1484, there was paid 4d. "for a chain of iron with a holy-water stick at the south church door." At St Mary-at-Hill, E.C., in 1479, there was paid 4d. "for holy water sprynclys to the church." Durandus says, "Vas istud aquæ benedictæ e marmore lapideve solida fieri debet, adspergillumque decens e labro catenula appensum habere."

The solid stoup of which we have spoken above is not to be confounded with the portable stoup or bucket of holy water, which was carried to asperge the altars, or the ministrants, or the congregation, or the passers by when the viaticum was taken to the sick.

Norman stoups have been identified at Lastingham, Yorkshire; Stanton Harcourt, Oxon.; Castle Hedingham, Essex (165); Penmon, Anglesea; St Peter's, Oxford; Barton-on-the-Heath and Beaudesert, Warwick; Eaton Socon, Beds.; Great Gidding, Hunts., and elsewhere. Many stoups are so plain that it is impossible to date them; it is unsafe in such cases to refer them back to Norman times. A few have thirteenth-century detail; *e.g.*, at Horsepath, Oxon., and Melrose abbey; others have detail of the fourteenth century, *e.g.*, that in St Alban's cathedral (much restored); others are later.

[1] Illustrated in *Proceedings of Society of Antiquaries*, II. xiv. 308.

[2] Cox and Harvey, *ibid.*, p. 239; and Francis Bond's *Fonts and Font Covers*, p. 72.

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INDEX LOCORUM

The page number is printed in Clarendon type where there is an illustration

ABERDEEN, 212, 215
Adderbury, Oxon., **202**, 46, 50, 192
Addlethorpe, 13, 42, 211
Adisham, Kent, **69**, 70, 110
Airlie, 215
Albury, 256
Aldesham, 110
Aldingbourne, **77**, 80
Aldwerk, 4
Alexandria, 2, 41
Alfriston, 102
Alvechurch, 143
Amiens, 170
Angers, 77
Arlesley, 241
Arnold, 240
Arundel, 7, 41, 49, 102
Ashbourne, **180**, 35, 181, 183
Ashburton, 102, 141
Ashby, **155**, 152, 160
Ashe, 148
Ashley, 246
Astbury, **111**, **133**, 15, 113, 138
Astell, 16
Asthall, **8**, 9, 50
Aston, 210
Auchindoin, **218**, 215, 216
Auckland, 1, 258
Augsburg, 203
Auxerre, 41
Avington, 148, 194

BAGAI, 2
Bagnacavallo, 21
Bagnols, 6
Baltonsborough, 194
Bamberg, 219
Bamborough, 158
Bampton, **81**, **229**, 82, 236
Bapchild, **148**
Barfreston, 42
Bari, 22
Barking, All Hallows, 139, 241
Barnwell, Northants, **83**, 82
Barrington, 210
Barrow, 194
Barton Bendish, **144**, 156
Barton-le-Street, 148
Barton-on-the-Heath, 258
Basle, 17
Bassingbourn, 105, 141
Bass Rock, 217
Battle, Sussex, 172
Beaudesert, 258
Beckington, 134
Beckley, 194
Bedale, 50
Beeston Regis, **109**, 113
Belper, 9, 15, 50
Bengeworth, 80
Bergen, 18
Beverley minster, **86**, **195**, **196**, **197**, 85, 179, 190, 195, 198
Béziers, 6
Billingford, 256
Bilton, 158
Bishopstone, 75
Blagdon, **154**, 160
Blakeney, **210**, 211
Blewbury, Berkshire, **17**, 16
Bloxham, **163**, 151, 160, 181
Blythford, 113
Boarhunt, 42
Bodmin, **145**, **146**, 151, 156

Bolam, 141
Bologna, St Stefano, 203
Bolton, 174
Bolton priory, 195
Bosham, **166**, 160, 162
Boston, 39
Bourges, 212
Boxgrove, **58**, 58
Brackley, 108
Bradden, 224
Braisnes, 40
Bramhope, 18
Bramley, 121
Brancepeth, **117**, 120
Branscombe, 134
Brayfield, 24
Brecon, 140
Bredon, 20
Bridgenorth, 50
Bridgwater, **253**, 244, 247, 252
Brill, 132
Brilley, 23
Bristol cathedral, 56, 82, 179
Bristol churches, 26, 124, 134, 141
Bristol, Mayor's chapel, **61**, 59, 181, 195, 253
Bristol, St Mary Redcliffe, 233
Brittany, 173, 203, 256
Broadhempston, 194
Brook, 46
Broughton, **16**, 15, 24, 50
Brownsover, 158
Bruges, 218
Bulkington, 120
Bunbury, 73
Burford, 50, 70
Burghill, 158
Burgos, St Nicholas, **95**, **96**, 94
Burlescombe, **113**, 114
Burs, 203
Burton Dasset, 50
Bury, Oise, France, **63**
Bury St Edmunds, 28, 48
Buxted, 182

CALDECOTE, 256
Calder abbey, 38
Callington, 35
Camborne, 17
Cambridge, Jesus College, 148, 160
Cambridge, St Botolph, 142
Cambridge, St Mary, 102
Cambridge, Trinity College, 123
Canterbury cathedral, 4, 18, 28, 38, 43, 48, 129, 170
Canterbury, St Augustine's, 29
Canterbury, St Dunstan, **115**, 114, 115, 256
Carlisle, 136, 154, 174
Carrière, St Denis, 77
Castle Ashby, 148
Castle Hedingham, Essex, **165**, 162, 179, 256, 258
Castle Rising, Norfolk, **54**, 13, 42, 54, 154
Castor, Northants, **82**, 80
Catacombs, 3
Catterick, 178
Caversfield, 148
Certosa, 203
Chaddesden, 194, 210
Charlton, Wiltshire, **252**, 247, 252
Chatham, 191
Chellaston, 62
Chelsfield, 232
Chelsham, 28
Chelvey, Somerset, **112**, 114
Cherington, 158
Chertsey, 97
Chesterfield, 140
Chesterton, 120, 158
Chew Magna, 136
Chipping Camden, **201**, 181, 183, 192
Chipping Norton, **13**, **243**, 15, 42, 50, 83, 245
Chipping Ongar, 29
Chipping Warden, 173
Chipstead, 181
Chichester cathedral, **74**, **75**, **93**, 32, 52, 94
Christchurch, Hants, **7**, **56**, **87**, **89**, **163**, 7, 16, 46, 50, 51, 56, 58, 59, 83, 85, 88, 90, 151, 162, 247, 250
Christiania, 18
Chollerton, 1
Church Lawford, 158
Citeaux, 46
Cividale, 22
Clairvaux, 36
Clandon, 148
Clapton-in-Gordano, 50, 51, 112, 154
Claypole, 7, 46, 50
Cleeve, 158
Cliffe at Hoo, Kent, **126**, 137
Clun, 23
Cluny, 22, 62, 77, 145, 211. (See *Paris*.)
Coberley, 119

Cobham, 173
Coblentz, 62
Colchester, 105
Cold Overton, 51
Collingtree, 210
Cologne, 219
Compton, 50
Compton Wynyates, 50
Coningsborough, 148
Constantinople, 40
Cookham, 16
Corton, 50
Cotes-by-Stow, 16
Cotterstock, 195
Coughton, 28
Coulsdon, Surrey, **184**, 152, 183, 185
Coventry, 103, 124, 132, 231
Cranford St John, 24
Cranleigh, 241
Cransley, 222
Crawley, Hampshire, **243**, 154, 248
Crediton, 179
Crich, 36
Cricklade, 84
Croston, 48
Crowmarsh, 148
Croxton, 220
Cudham, 158
Cullen, 215, 216, 217
Curdworth, Warwickshire, **249**, 245

DAGLINGWORTH, 5
Darenth, 119, 139
Dartmouth, 132
Daventry, 24, 104
Dean, 152
Deddington, 158
Deerhurst, **125**, 136
Denford, 195
Dennington, 13
Derby, 120
Dersingham, **161**, 160, 173
Deskford, 214, 215, 216, 217
Digne, 6
Dijon, 70
Dinan, 173
Dinton, 113
Ditchling, 158, 194
Doddington, 198, 256
Dorchester, Oxon., **198**, **199**, 182, 183, 191, 198
Dore Abbey, Hereford, 16, 38, 50
Dulas, 50
Dunster, 50
Dunwich, 64
Durham cathedral, **99**, 24, 29, 37, 38, 40, 41, 44, 69, 94, 97, 102, 104, 120, 158, 180, 195, 206, 224, 256
Durham, St Oswald's, 203

EARL'S BARTON, 179
East Dereham, 256
East Farleigh, 247
East Harling, Norfolk, **222**, 234, 236
East Marden, 158
Eastwell, 121
Eaton Bray, **79**, **107**, 80, 113
Eaton Hastings, 194
Eaton Socon, 258
Ebrach, 46
Ecton, 152, 256
Edgcote, 60
Edlesborough, 194
Ellesmere, 158
Elmley Lovett, 132
Ely cathedral, 48, 56, 80
Enford, 244
Enstone, **45**, 42, 50
Epone, 3
Ermington, 136
Eton, 13
Exeter cathedral, **73**, **159**, **197**, 13, 26, 38, 42, 74, 98, 160, 173, 179, 191
Exeter, Vicars Chorals hall, 114
Eynsham, 123

FAIRFORD, 84
Farleigh, 138
Farnham, **137**, 138
Feering, 256
Fenny Compton, 132
Filey, 181
Finchampstead, **152**, 152, 160, 162
Floore, 210
Florence, 3
Ford, 80
Forehampton, 5, 7, 15, 49
Fotheringhay, 143
Foulis, Scotland, **213**, 215
Fountains abbey, Yorkshire, 41, 154, 156
Fraisthorpe, 110
Frankfurt, 203
Frenze, 154
Fressing, 9
Fressingfield, **111**, 113
Frisia, 37

Fritton, 148
Frome, 158, 198
Furness abbey, Lancashire, **173**, 102, 154, 156, 170, 192, 195
Fyfield, 270

GATCOMBE, 139
Geddington, **80**, 20, 80
Gillingham, 19
Glasgow, 13
Glastonbury, 38, 49
Gloucester cathedral, **200**, 13, 16, 46, 50, 56, 58, 59, 67, 68, 83, 98, 130, 148, 152, 154, 158, 181, 192
Gloucester, St Nicholas, **247**, 245
Goldington, 182
Goosey, 23
Gothland, 205
Grado, 178
Grantham, **5**, **147**, **148**, 5, 35, 46, 50, 158
Graveley, 148
Great Billing, 82
Great Bookham, 250
Great Canfield, 73
Great Coates, 241
Great Gidding, 258
Great Hallingbury, 158
Great Snoring, **169**, 154, 160
Great Staughton, **129**, 137
Great Walsingham, **128**, **208**, 137, 210
Grenoble, 214
Grosmont, 50, 173
Guildford, 20, 248
Guimiliau, Brittany, **257**, 256
Gumfreston, 136

HADDENHAM, 114
Haddon Hall, 110
Haconby, 70
Hales, **122**, 134
Halesworth, **118**, 120
Halford Bridge, Warwickshire, **244**, 245
Halsham, **181**, 181
Hampton, 234
Hanwell, Oxon., **73**, 74, 82
Harleton, 256
Harlington, Middlesex, **231**, 238
Harpley, 181
Hastings, 195
Hauxton, 13
Hawton, Notts., **187**, **235**, **237**, 183, 191, 239
Haydon, 151
Haydon Bridge, 1
Heacham, 132
Heckington, Lincolnshire, **188**, **189**, **190**, **238**, 191, 220
Hedingham, Essex, **177**
Heilbronn, 219
Helpringham, Lincolnshire, **178**, 185
Helpston, 180
Hemel Hempstead, 206
Hemingborough, 236
Hereford, All Saints, 114
Hereford, St Peter, 140
Hessett, 26
Hevingham, 154
Hildesheim, 38
Histon, 148
Holmer, 140
Horbling, 149, 240
Horningsey, 158
Horsepath, 258
Horton, 105
Hovingham, 18
Hurstmonceaux, 234
Hythe, Kent, **185**, 20, 185, 211

IFFLEY, 42
Iford, 149
Ipswich, 247
Irby, 174
Irthlingborough, Northants, **254**, 244, 245, 250, 256
Islip, 173
Islip Roll, **30**, 24, 29, 212

JARROW, 36
Jersey, 119
Jerusalem, 40
Jervaulx abbey, Yorkshire, **34**, 34, 50

KEELBY, 149
Kemerton, 151
Kenton, Devon, **242**
Keston, 16
Kidderminster, 117, 124, 126
Kilpeck, 149
Kingsthorpe, 210
Kingston, 119
Kinkell, **217**, 215
Kintore, **216**, 215, 217

Kirk Hallam, 174
Kirkham priory, Yorkshire, 154, 158
Kirkstall abbey, Yorkshire, 46, 102, 149, 170, 203
Knaresborough, 39
Knockholt, 75

LAMBETH, 140
La Morera, 31
Lanercost, 38
Langdon, 156
Langford, **207**, 211
Langley chapel, ***123***, 132
Langley Marish, 132, 195
Lanteglos-by-Fowey, **151**, 160
Lastingham, 258
Layer Marney, 46
Leamington, 141
Léau, 219
Lee, 194
Leeds Castle, 113, 114
Leeds, St John's, 15
Leicester, St Mary's, **177**, 152, 179, 181
Leicester, St Martin, 137, 149
Le Mans, 40
Lenham, 194
Leonard Stanley, 136
Le Puy, 39, 46
Lewes, 245
Lewknor, 119
Lichfield cathedral, 139
Lidbury, 50
Lincoln minster, **149**, ***213***, ***232***, 156, 160, 168, 176, 205, 227, 238
Lisbjerg, 77
Litchfield, 174
Little Bytham, 211
Little Casterton, 154, 156
Little Hereford, 158
Little Oakley, 50
Little Wilbraham, 182
Llandaff, 84
Llanrwst, 113
Loja, 6
London, Austin Friars, 127, 132
London, St Bartholomew's, 141
London, St Botolph, 224
London, St Cyprian, 26
London, St Dunstan's, 142
London, St George the Martyr, 144
London, St Giles in the Fields, 122
London, St James's, 139
London, St Mary-at-Hill, 24, 26, 39, 102, 221, 256, 258
London, St Michael's, Cornhill, 41, 105
London, St Peter's, Cornhill, 115
London, St Peter Cheap, 105
London, St Stephen's, Walbrook, **119**, **130**, 118, 138, 212, 224
Longmarton, 174
Long Melford, 26, 27, 54, 66, 69, 234
Long Stanton, **155**, 160
Long Wittenham, 158
Loughborough, 120
Louvain, 219
Lower Altaich, 6
Luccombe, 194
Ludlow, Salop, **25**, **53**, 23, 54, 62, 106
Lufton, 119
Lustleigh, 102
Luton, 195
Lutterworth, **116**, 114, 116
Lyddington, **124**, 134
Lye, 203
Lyons, 134
Lytchett Matravers, 132

MAASTRICHT, 36, 77
Madron Well, 35
Maidstone, 195
Mallwydd, 132
Malvern priory, 80, 90
Manchester, 172
Margate, 158
Maxey, ***221***, 158, 236
Medbourne, 181
Melrose, 258
Melton Constable, Norfolk, **44**, 42
Melton Mowbray, 46, 126, 256
Meopham, 84
Merstham, 46
Michaelchurch, 23
Mickleham, 9
Middleton, Lancashire, **228**, 236
Milan, 203
Milan, S. Ambrogio, 17, 22
Milan, S. Celso, 3
Mildenhall, Suffolk, **183**, 182
Millom, 174
Milton abbey, Dorset, **179**, 92, 102, 179, 253
Milverton, 136
Minchinhampton, 220
Minehead, Somerset, **106**

Minster Lovell, Oxon., **252**, 246, 250
Minster, Thanet, **204**, 204
Modena, 36
Mordiford, 140
Morebath, 39
Monkton, Thanet, **150**, 160
Montmajour, Provence, **33**, 6
Monyash, 179
Mytton, 19

NANCY, 220
Naples, 3
Narburgh, 241
Narni, 22
Navenby, Lincolnshire, **233**, 239
Nettlestead, 234
Newbiggin, 174
Newnham Murren, Oxon., **242**, 244
New Shoreham, Sussex, **12**, 49, 158
Norbury, Derbyshire, **161**, 160, 173, 174
Northampton, 39
North Elmham, 126
North Hinksey, 244
Northleach, 50
North Marston, 158
North Somercotes, 42
North Stoke, 148
Northwold, Norfolk, **240**, 240
Norwich cathedral, **67**, 34, 46, 66, 241
Norwich churches, 64, 67
Norwich, St Peter Mancroft, 54
Nunney Castle, 50
Nuremberg, 218, 219

OCKLEY, 141
Ockwells, 164
Oddington, 158
Ombersley, Worcestershire, **110**, 113, 127
Ongar, 136
Ormside, 174
Othery, 248
Otterbourne, 246
Ottery St Mary, Devon, **88**, 48, 85, 88, 98, 195
Over Whichendon, 132
Oxford, All Souls, 56, 92, 94, **255**
Oxford cathedral, 104
Oxford, Christ church, 122
Oxford, Jesus College, 114
Oxford, Magdalen College, 236
Oxford, New College, 56, 92
Oxford, St Mary, 140
Oxford, St Mary Magdalene, 212
Oxford, St Michael, 172
Oxford, St Peter's, 258
Oxford, Wadham, 114

PADERBORN, 36
Padua, 203
Paisley, 195
Parenzo, 23
Paris, Cluny Museum, 77, 170. (See *Cluny*.)
Paris, St Germain des Prés, 62
Parshall Hall, 132
Patricio, Brecknock, **11**, 13, 42, 49
Patrington, Yorkshire, **78**, **194**, **239**, 80, 152, 188, 239
Patrishow, 13
Pavia, 203
Pembrokeshire, 254
Penkevel, St Michael, 46, 50
Penmon, 256, 258
Penshurst, 110
Perugia, 3, 21
Peterborough cathedral, **97**, 26, 94, 158, 212, 248
Peterchurch, Hereford, 42, 49
Peterhausen, 6
Pettistree, 154, 160
Petworth, 158
Pluscarden, 215, 217
Porlock, Somerset, **230**, 50, 237
Porta Santa, 22
Powick, 114
Poynings, 132
Puddleton, 132
Pulborough, 211
Prestbury, 140
Preston, 19, 48
Pyecombe, 246
Pylle, 256
Pytchley, 149

QUAT, 245
Queenborough, 173
Queen Camel, 194
Quelven, 227
Quito, 164

RAINHAM, St Mary, 27, 234
Ranworth, Norfolk, **9**, **65**, 13, 42, 66, 68
Ratisbon, 17, 203
Rattlesden, 210
Ravenna, 2, 4, 33
Ravenna, S. Apollinare in Classe, 21
Ravenna, S. Giovanni i Fonte, **33**
Reading, St Lawrence, 24, 41, 62, 105, 141, 220, 228, 231
Reculver, 246
Reigate, 84
Repton, 50
Rheims cathedral, 52, 212
Riccall, Yorkshire, **153**, 151, 160
Richmond, 210
Rievaulx abbey, Yorkshire, 34, 50, 154
Ringstead, 210
Ripon, **7**, 49, 102
Roche abbey, Yorkshire, 34
Rochester cathedral, 28, 48, 156
Rodmell, Sussex, **250**, 245
Rodmersham, Kent, **203**, 198
Rolvenden, 220
Rome, Churches in, 2, 6, 21, 22, 23, 29, 31, 32, 36, 39, 52, 60, 101, 166, 216, 217
Rome, St John Lateran, 2, 21, 23, 52
Romsey, 51, 67, 149
Rose Ash, Devon, **132**, 138
Ross, 158
Rothersthorpe, Northants, **205**, 205, 210
Rothwell, 148, 195
Rottingdean, 20
Rouen, 228
Rushden, Northants, **191**, **213**, 185, 204
Ryarsh, 149
Rye, 120

ST ALBAN'S CATHEDRAL, **47**, **71**, **165**, 32, 39, 46, 47, 52, 70, 84, 92, 98, 160, 258
St Andrew's, 215
St Bride's Major, 141
St Clamens, 3
S. Clemente, 22
St David's cathedral, **43**, **201**, 38, 42, 192, 198
St Decuman's, Somerset, **127**, **138**, 137, 138
St Denis, 164
St Fagan's, Glamorgan, **186**, 188
St Faith, **72**, 71
St Gall, 13, 40
St German's, 141
St Germer, France, 5, 18
St Heliers, 119
St Ives, 149
St Just, 231
St Michael's Mount, 46
St Miguel de Escalada, 31
St Osyth, 132
St Paul's, Old, 13, 32, 38, 52
St Paul's Shrine, **32**
S. Pietro in Grado, 23
St Pol de Leon, 173
S. Savin sur Gartempe, 52
Saintes, 40
Salerno, 18
Salhouse, 253
Salisbury cathedral, **103**, **207**, **209**, 40, 48, 102, 103, 104, 160, 176, 205, 211
Salisbury, St Edmund, 136, 224
Salisbury, St Thomas, **81**, 82
Sall, 44, 46
Salley abbey, 148
Sandal Magna, 105
Sandwich, 7
Saragossa, 94
Saxby, 20
Sawley, 53, 84
Scarcliffe, 149
Scawton, Yorkshire, **249**, 244, 246
Sefton, Lancashire, **206**, 205, 210
Selby abbey, Yorkshire, 85, 88, 98, 160
Sellack, 141
Send, 141
Shalford, **193**, 188
Sharnbrook, 19, 181
Sheffield, 198
Shepton Mallet, **157**, 152, 160
Sherborne, 25, 70
Shere, 40, 44, 46, 248, 253
Shillingford, 132
Shillington, 102
Shotteswell, 15, 46, 50, 132
Shrivenham, 132
Sibthorpe, 220, 238, 239
Sieburg, 36
Skelton, **153**, 151, 160, 173, 174
Skidbrook, 114
Skipwith, **153**, 151, 160
Skirlaugh, 102
Slaugham, 241
Smarden, 105
Smisby, 80

Snitterfield, 234
Solihull, 50
Somerton, **81**
Sompting, 211
Southampton, 141
South Harting, 158
South Leigh, 148
South Petherton, 53
South Pool, 236
Southwark cathedral, **91**, 92
Southwell minster, **193**, 42, 190
Southwold, Suffolk, **175**, **182**, 118, 175, 182, 195
Spennithorne, 194
Spetchley, Worcestershire, **114**, 114
Staindrop, 185
Standycke, 48
Stanford, **174**, 173, 211
Stanningfield, 236
Stanton Fitzwarren, 149
Stanton Harcourt, Oxon., **225**, 42, 236, 258
Stanwell, 27, 236
Stean, 120
Stepney, **184**, 183, 185
Steyning, 9
Stockton, Wilts., **246**, 244, 252
Stoke Coursy, 105
Stoke Poges, 149
Stoughton, 174
Stow, 72
Stratford-on-Avon, **223**, 195, 236
Street, 195
Sutton, 141
Sutton Benger, 80
Swansea, 241
Swavesey, **192**, 188
Swayfield, 140
Swine, 210

TARRANT RUSHTON, **248**, 244, 245, 252
Tarring Neville, 50
Tattershall, **10**, 13, 42
Taunton, Somerset, **243**, 83
Tenby, 158
Tewkesbury, 7, 67, 98, 174, 179, 191, 198, 253
Thame, 140, 214
Theddlethorpe, All Saints, **76**, **117**, 13, 15, 42, 79, 120
Theddlethorpe, St Helen's, **76**, 79
Theydon Garnon, 126
Thorpe, 141
Thorpe Arnold, 174
Thorpe Salvin, 174
Tichborne, 15, 50
Tideswell, 50, 53
Tilbrook, 154
Tintagel, 50
Tintinhull, 25, 102
Toddington, 136
Toledo cathedral, 48, 94
Tollerton, 149
Tongres, 3
Tor Bryan, 18
Torcello, 178, 203
Toscanella, 22
Tours, 212
Towersey, 149
Trotton, 121
Troyes, 36, 77
Trumpington, **157**, 160, 173
Trunch, 182, 211
Tunstall, 232
Tunstead, 53
Turriff, 216, 217
Turvey, 195
Twywell, Northants, **226**, 210, 236
Tynemouth, 32, 52
Tyre, 40

UFFINGTON, 181
Ufford, 219
Ulm, 219
Upchurch, 198
Upper Donhead, 114
Upton Grey, 205
Urbano alla Caffarella, 52
Urishay, 42, 149

VAISON, Provence, **14**, 15, 18, 176
Venasque, Provence, **14**, 15
Venice, St Mark's, 22, 62, 203
Venice, St Saviour, 77
Venice, St Zacharias, 6
Verona, 203, 214

WALBERSWICK, 24
Walpole St Andrew, 156
Walpole St Peter, 20
Walsall, 132
Waltham, 132, 224
Wargrave, 132
Warkworth, 50

Warmington, Warwick, **15**, 15, 46, 50, 247
Warwick, **168**, 152, 162
Watford, Hertfordshire, **100**, 100
Weasenham, 256
Wechselbourg, 77
Wedmore, **171**, 162, 211
Welham, 120
Wellingore, **178**, 179, 185
Wellington, 83
Wells cathedral, **55**, 50, 56, 75, 154, 156
Wells, St Cuthbert, **84**, **85**, 83
Wenlock priory, Salop, **45**, 18, 46, 50, 102
Wensley, 204
Westborough, 35
Westbury, 136
Westhall, 173
Westhide, 140
West Kirkby, 241
Westleton, 53
Westminster abbey, **30**, **59**, **60**, **72**, 23, 24, 26, 29, 39, 48, 50, 51, 58, 66, 71, 83, 90, 116, 123, **141**, 179, 195, 198, 212
Westminster cathedral, 19, 26
Westminster, St Margaret, 142, 212
Weston Beggard, 132
Weston Zoyland, **107**, 113
West Stafford, **125**, 137
Whitchurch, 19, 35, 254
Whitehall, 172
Whitwell, 118
Wiggenhall, 132
Wigmore, 158
Wigtoft, 258
Willingham, 50
Wimborne, 20, 126, 132, 140
Winchelsea, 198
Winchester cathedral (*Frontispiece*), **134**, **135**, 18, 58, 90, 92, 98, 138
Winchester, St Cross, **172**, 70, 73, 170
Winchester, St John's, 237
Winchcombe, 136
Winchfield, 149
Windsor, St George's, 94
Winfarthing, 174
Winford, 149
Wingfield, **251**, 247
Winterton, 220
Withybrook, 241
Wittilbury, 105
Wivelsfield, 71
Woodborough, 18
Woodbury, **131**, 138
Woodford, 174
Worcester cathedral, **57**, 4, 48, 58, 82
Worcester, St Michael's, 132
Worstead, **68**, 66
Worth, 138
Wroughton, 194
Wyke Champflower, 132
Wymynswold, 222
Wyre Piddle, **245**, 245

YARMOUTH, GREAT, 181, 195, 224
Yatton, **167**, 102, 162, 173
Yaverland, 119
York, 4, 9, 38, 40, 49, 94, 132
Youlgreave, **64**, 64

INDEX RERUM

ABLUTIONS at Mass, 144
Alabaster, 62
Almery, 204
Altar, 1-50
Altar beam, 28
Altar canopy, 20, 23
Altar choir, 48
Altar, crosses on, 16
Altar, dimensions of, 7
Altar, lay, 101
Altar, ornamentation of, 17
Altar, portable, 39
Altar rails, 121
Altar screens, 85
Altar, shape of, 6
Altar slabs, 49
Altar steps, 19
Altars, Cistercian, 41
Altars, destruction of, 48
Altars, detached, 53
Altars, elevation of, 19
Altars, inscribed, 18
Altars, lateral, 9
Altars, minor, 50
Altars, number of, 40
Altars, position of, 42
Altars, supports of, 15
Altars, survival of, 49
Altars, why large, 8
Anchorites, 248
Antipendium, 17
Arcisolium, 3, 29, 51
Asperser, 258
Aumbry, 204 211

BALDACHINO, 20
Balusters, 119, 137
Benedictio aquæ, 255
Benitier, 255
Bishop's throne, 52

CATACOMBS, 3
Capsæ, 35
Chancel arch, triple, 246
Chancels, raised, 20
Chancels, sunk, 19
Chantry chapels, 46, 58
Chapels, 42, 44, 46
Charnel houses, 46
Chest, church, 206
Choir altar, 48
Ciborium, 20
Cippi, 6
Cistercian altars, 41
Cœlatura, 24
Communicants, posture and position of, 121
Communion table, 106
Communion table, position of, 123
Confessio, 23, 29, 31
Consecration of altar, 39
Corporals, 35, 168
Costers, 19
Credence shelf, 173
Credence table, 164-175
Crypt, 29
Cubiculum, 29

DORSAL, 59

EASTER sepulchre, 27, 220-241
Eucharist, meaning of, 121
Exposition of Sacrament, 212

FERETORY, 32
Frontal, 17, 18, 62

GRADINE, 51

HAGIOSCOPE, 242
Holy Communion, 121-136
Houseling cloth, 140

ICONOSTASIS, 101
Images, 226, 227
Image brackets, 26
Imago principalis, 26

JASPER, 38
Jesse tree, 83

LADY chapels, 56
Laudian rails, 131
Lavacrum, 143
Lavatory, 143, 158
Lenten veil, 101
Locker, 204
Locus preparationis, 100

MARTYRS, 3, 29
Melon, 112
Mensa, 3, 4, 16
Ministerium, 170
Mortars, 258

ORIENTATION, 52

PAINTED reredos, 66
Paschal candle, 224
Patron Saint, image of, 26
Pier altars, 46
Piscina, 143-163
Piscina basin, 151
Piscina bowl, 156
Piscina doors, 152
Piscina, double, 146
Piscina in floor, 154
Presbyteries, 178
Pyx, 20, 212
Pyx veil, 24

RAILS of altar, 121
Real Presence, 146
Relics, 29, 31
Reliquaries, 28, 32
Reredos, 51
Reredos, alabaster, 62, 94
Reredos, architectural, 74
Reredos, doors of, 98
Reredos, omission of, 52
Reredos, painted, 66
Reservation of Sacrament, 211
Retable, 51
Riddels, 19, 62, 101
Rood altars, 48
Rood cloth, 104
Rood screens, 84
Rood veil, 104

SACRAMENT, coffer, 212
Sacrament House, 211
Sacrarium, 143
Sacristries, 206
Sanctus bell, 252
Sarcophagus, 3
Seal of altar, 35
Sedes paratæ, 176
Sedilia, 98, 176
Sedilia, continental, 203
Sedilia, levels of, 181
Sedilia, number of, 194
Sepulchre, drama of, 228
Shrine, 32, 52
Sprinkler, 258
Squint, 242-254
Stoup, holy water, 255
St Peter's altar, 2
Strinkel, 258
Superaltars, 36

TABLES, alabaster, 64
Tables, design of, 108
Tables, telescopic, 115
Tester, 20, 23
Tower altars, 46
Transepts, 46
Transubstantiation, 146
Triptychs, 69

VEIL of Pyx, 24
Viaticum, 35, 212

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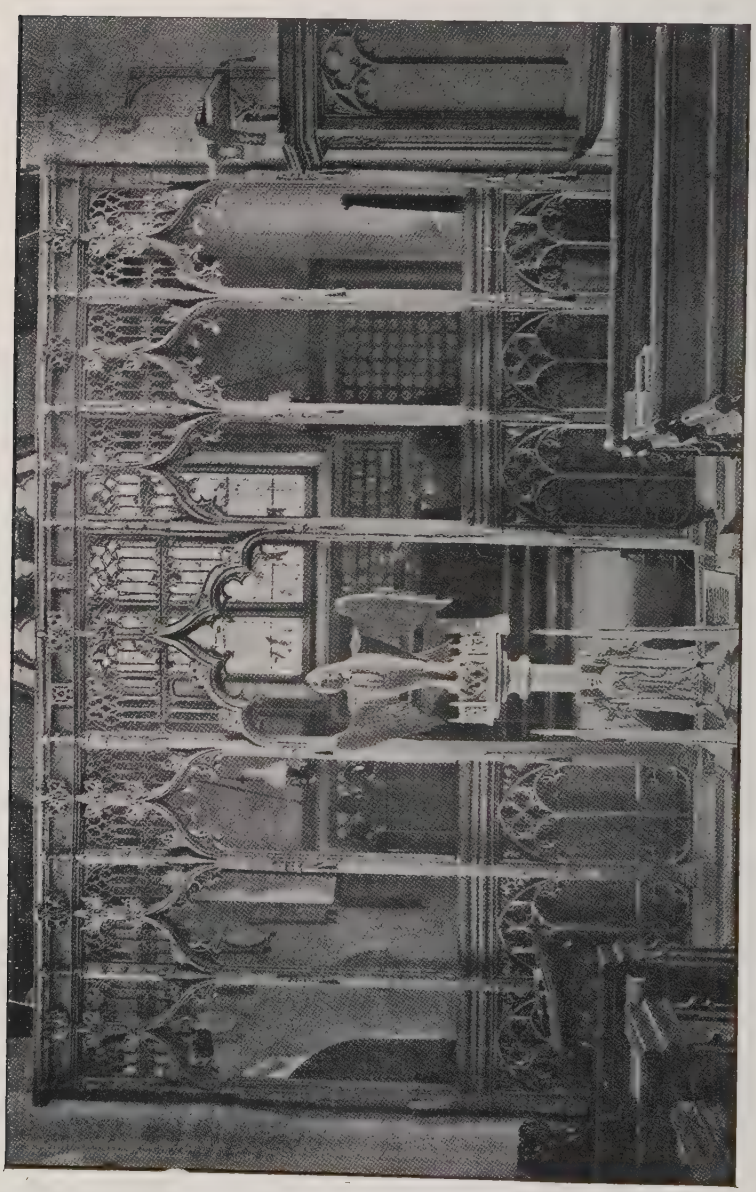

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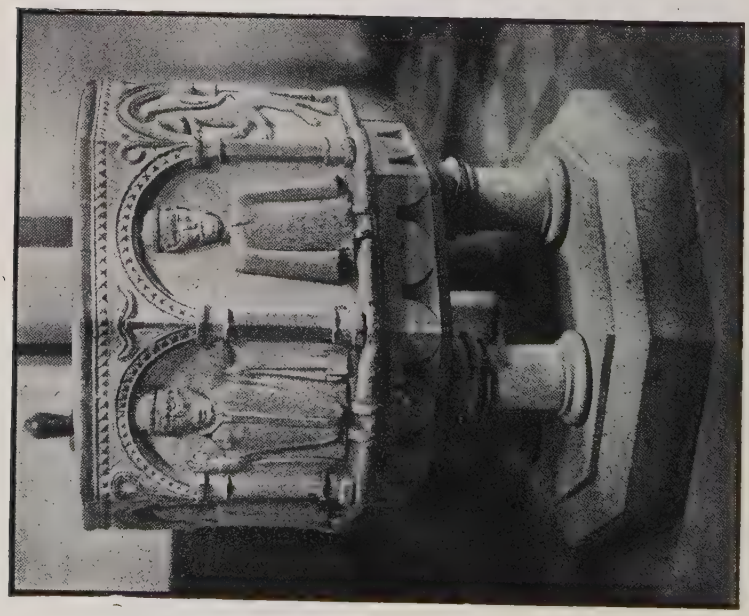

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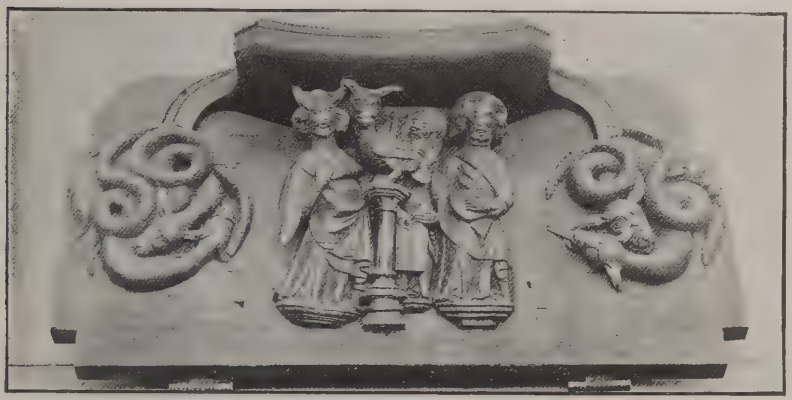

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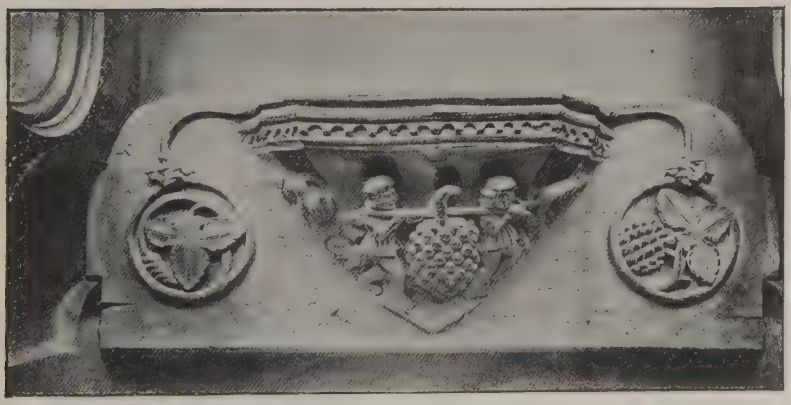

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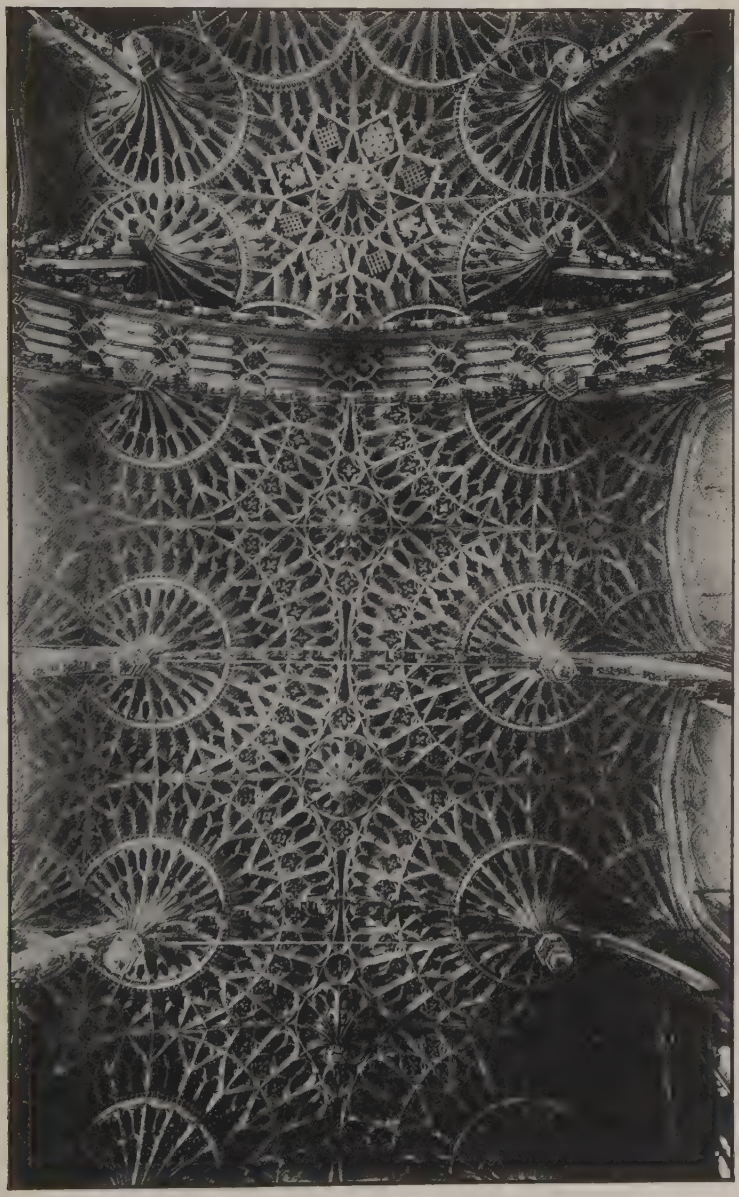

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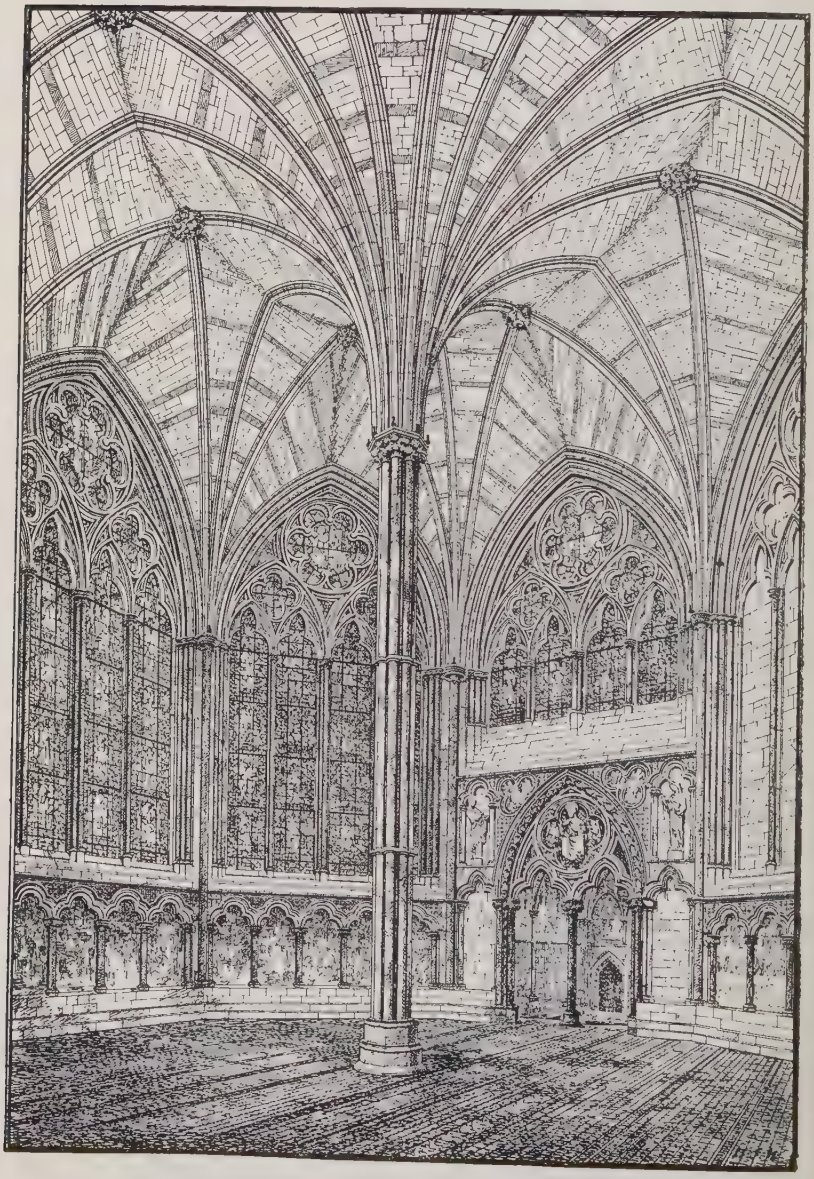

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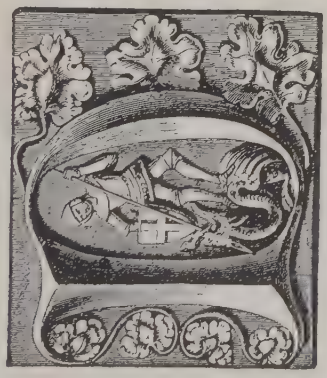

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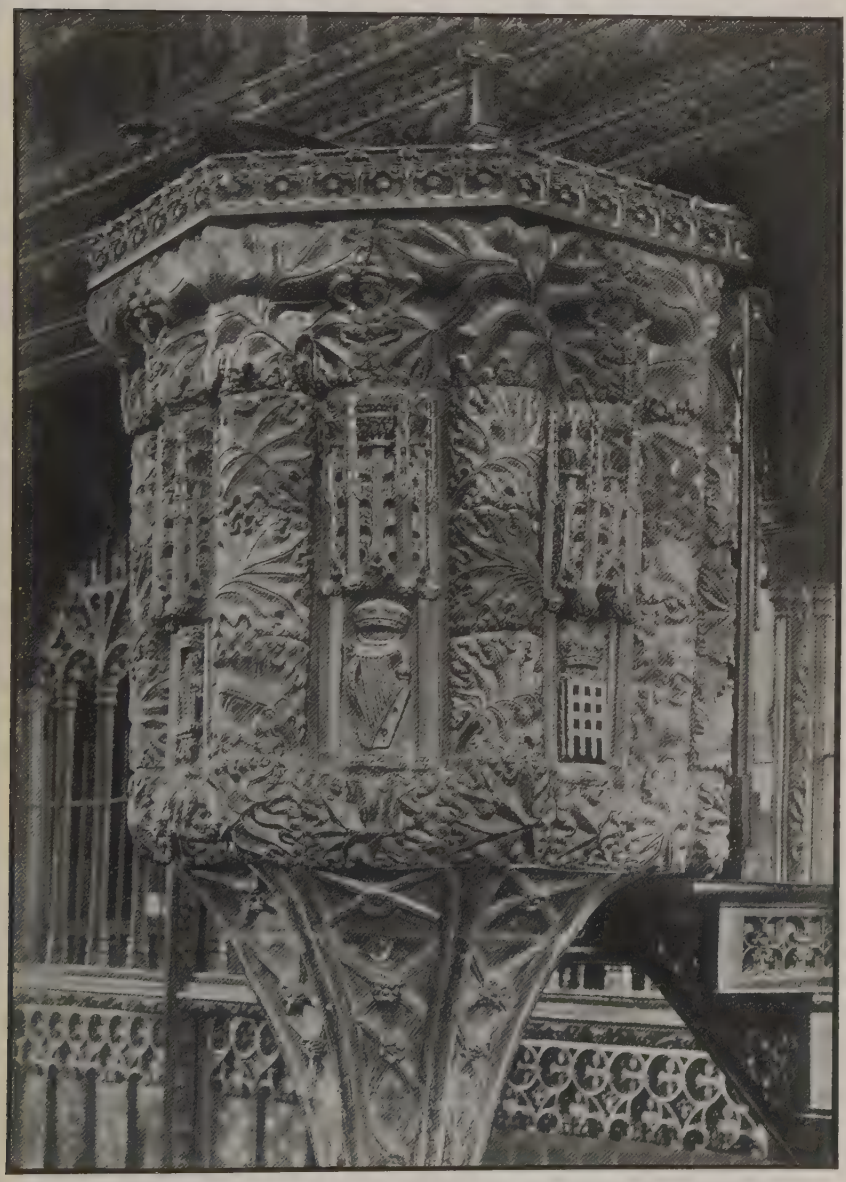

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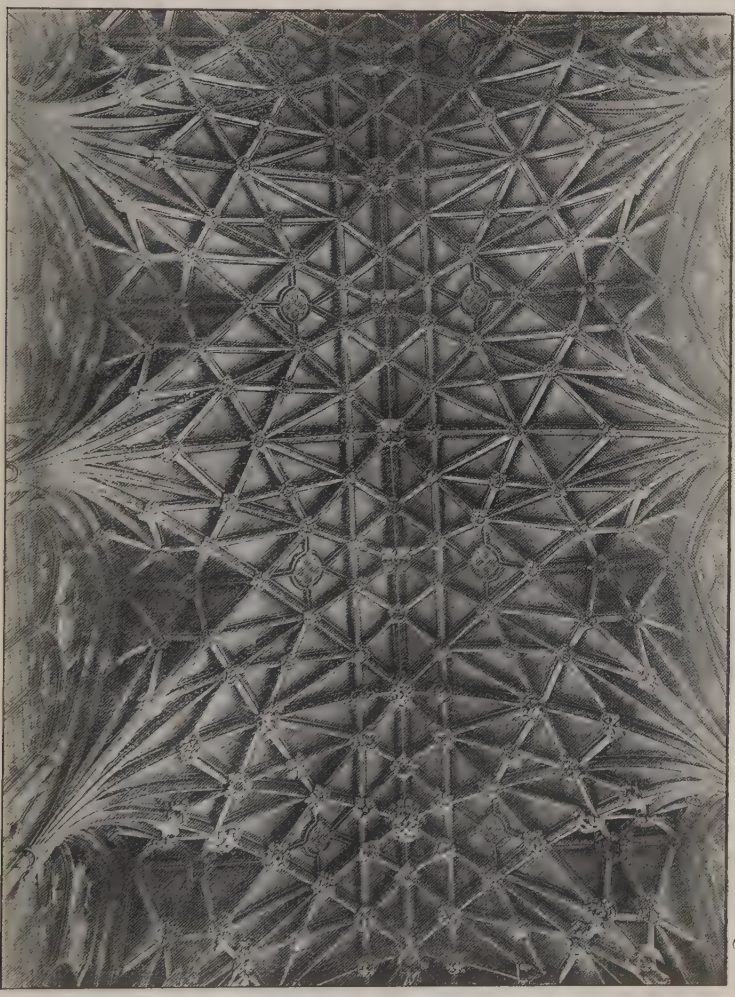

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